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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

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A National Magazine of
Politics, Business, and Culture

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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

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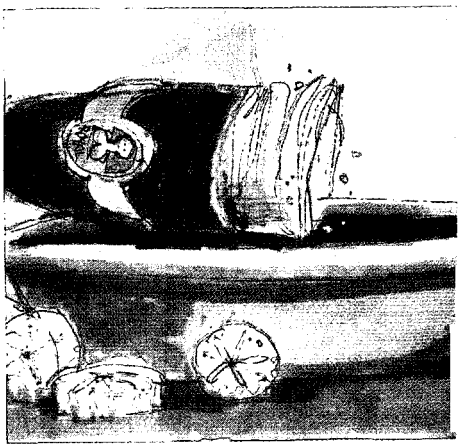

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PUBLISHER *CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH*
EDITOR IN CHIEF *KARL ZINSMEISTER*
SENIOR EDITOR *SCOTT WALTER*
ASSISTANT EDITOR *WALTER S. MONTANO*
ASSOCIATE EDITORS *BILL KAUFFMAN*
MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER
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BUSINESS MANAGER *CHRISTINE REYERSON COYLE*
INTERN *SARAH ANKRAPP*
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS *EVAN GAHR, BLAKE HURST, JOEL KOTKIN, ELI LEHRER, DEROY MURDOCK, RALPH REILAND, BEN STEIN, FREDERICK TURNER*

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"The Mail," The American Enterprise,
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036,
or fax (202) 862-5867, or e-mail
TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com.

WEB PAGE
www.TheAmericanEnterprise.org

PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS OFFICE
The American Enterprise
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OFFICE OF THE EDITOR IN CHIEF
The American Enterprise
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Bird's Eye

KARL ZINSMEISTER

Chin Up: Some Ugly Trends Grow Lovelier

History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into a political and economic decline. There has either been a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration to ultimate national disaster.
—Douglas MacArthur

Admit it. You're glum.

For three decades, conservatives have been warning that moral decline is stalking America, and that if the rot isn't beaten back it will eventually fell our national oak. Now we have a President who personifies the worst late-twentieth-century vices—cowardice, selfishness, dishonesty—all in one breathtakingly putrid package. He has carried ethical decay baldly into the White House. And yet he is tolerated by the public, even after the full scope of his personal foulness has been exposed for all to see. Gloom.

Worse, the public's toleration of the scoundrel seems to be a result of their corruption: The national economy is filling pockets with unprecedented speed, goes the argument, so leave him alone. Will we now tolerate any depravity so long as it makes us rich? Doom.

This is no minor issue. As Alexander Tytler wrote two centuries ago in *The Decline and Fall of the Athenian Republic,* the great historical democracies have tended to last only a couple hundred years, during which time they have progressed through the following sequence:

From bondage to spiritual faith
From spiritual faith to great courage
From courage to liberty
From liberty to abundance
From abundance to selfishness
From selfishness to complacency
From complacency to apathy
From apathy to dependency
From dependency back into bondage

American forefather Cotton Mather made a similar observation in 1702, when he warned that "Religion has brought forth Prosperity, and the daughter destroyed the mother.... There is a danger lest the enchantments of this world make us forget our errand into the wilderness."

My friend Bill Mattox provides a contemporary analogy of the link between a nation's moral health and its material prosperity. He suggests the economic statistics that stir so much national interest (wage levels, Dow Jones averages, employment and inflation numbers) can be compared to hitting statistics in baseball. They're gaudy, exciting, easy to count. On the other hand, cultural indicators (which measure things like family strength and personal virtue) are more like defense and pitching stats—softer, not so obvious, much less glamorous. But, as baseball fans know, it's not hitting that ultimately wins championships. It's pitching and defense.

Everyone recognizes that America is currently doing great at the economic and business game—we're hitting the ball at a torrid pace. Asked whether America has turned a corner in the realm of economics, any sensible person would say "Yes, absolutely, much to the

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THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION IS CROSSING OVER INTO THE BROADER CULTURE. IT'S *NOT* 424,000 CULTURAL CONSERVATIVES WHO HAVE FLED NEW YORK CITY'S WELFARE ROLLS SINCE 1995.

better." The stagflation and lack of economic competitiveness that looked so threatening in the 1970s have been conquered.

But the quality of our defense and pitching—our moral integrity—is a lot less clear. The cultural/moral collapse that began in the late '60s has proven harder to reverse than business bloat and regulatory overload. Soaring crime, babies having babies, an abortion tidal wave, a seemingly permanent welfare boom, rising fatherlessness, ruined cities and schools, these have been more or less bedrock news stories for most of my adult life (I am 39). Not for nothing have Americans bitten their fingernails over these trends.

But very recently, some remarkable and encouraging developments have taken place. Many of the social trendlines that turned ugly in the '60s and '70s have begun to level off and even retreat, in many cases to their lowest levels in two or three decades.

Reinforcing this fresh evidence of altered behavior is attitudinal data indicating that many Americans have changed their minds on critical social questions, and are edging their way back toward tradition, moderation, and sanity. Strong majorities now name "reversing moral decline" as their highest priority for our nation. In their views toward family life, their sense of rights versus responsibilities, and their choices in political representatives, Americans are expressing a new public temperament.

No one bit of evidence is conclusive, of course. But look at the broad sweep of data that we have summarized for you on pages 36-51. It's impossible to scan these trends without noticing some remarkable simultaneous shifts in more wholesome directions.

Following our charts are essays by some distinguished observers we've asked to analyze the trends. Two of the writers, Rabbi Daniel Lapin and Allan Carlson, make the important point that not all Americans are moving in the same direction. In some behavioral arenas there are now "Two Americas"—one increasingly sobered and moving back toward religion, tradition, and personal accountability in their own lives, and another group that is still hell-bent for more '60s-style liberation. So some problems are getting *both* better and worse, with different sub-populations headed in opposite directions.

For certain behaviors—like drug use, teen sex, abortion—this analysis is undoubtedly accurate. We have a blossoming teen abstinence movement at the same time other kids are rutting in the aisles at Marilyn Manson concerts. The number of annual abortions has tumbled by a quarter-million from its peak, yet we still have some suburban teenagers dumping babies in trash cans.

But Lapin and Carlson underestimate, in my opinion, the extent to which the backlash against cultural decay has spread. Yes, it was primarily in family-oriented, religious, and traditionalist sectors that the counter-revolution was first incubated, but it is now "crossing over" into the broader culture. It is *not* 424,000 cultural conservatives who have fled New York City's welfare rolls since 1995.

Yes, it was cultural conservatives who forced welfare reform through Congress, and cultural conservatives who led the counterattack on street crime that gave us the new prisons and tougher laws that are fixing that problem. But now even liberal social workers, big-city mayors, and left-wing journalists have "gotten religion" on these issues. (See our story on page 42 on the heartening new consensus against welfare and for work.) Every social counterswing begins within an avant-garde, then spreads beyond it. The sheer number and variety of upturns make it clear that what we are witnessing is something broader and deeper than a retreat from '60s values by cultural conservatives alone.

There are now all kinds of quirky little bits of cultural good news in the air for people willing to recognize them, even in the most unlikely places. The *New York Times* recently reported that the Duke University English department—number one bastion of the worst Marxist, "Queer," and radical feminist academic rubbish—is now imploding into recriminations, acrid personal attacks, and scholarly bankruptcy.

Who expected that liberal journalists like Michael Kelly, Chris Matthews, and Christopher Hitchens would end up being Bill Clinton's sharpest critics, more thoroughly outraged by his immorality than any Republican suburbanite? And who would have thought that New York City would become one of the cleaner, more polite, and safer parts of America?

I recently attended the pre-Broadway run of a new musical and was stunned to discover that it was based on a Victorian novelette and bemoaned the seduction of innocent youth into blackest evil by corrupters who "don't believe in God" and insist that lies, deceit, and treacherous dishonesty are useful tools because truth "cannot be proved" anyway. If that's not a rebellion against cultural modernism, I don't know what is! Given the dreary left-wing, homophilic P.C. propaganda that has dominated Broadway for two decades, this was almost too much for my eyes to behold.

We are now getting hints of a public turn against TV. For the first time in the industry's history, viewing is falling off somewhat (see, for example, the figure for children on page 50). Book sales, meanwhile, are up strongly on a per capita basis. There was even a little research item this month reporting that for the first time in years, the growth of new mom-and-pop restaurants far outstripped the growth of franchises in 1998. (So much for the McDonald's-ization of America.)

You would have thought it physically impossible that we would enjoy a federal budget surplus this year, given the apocalyptic certainties uttered a decade ago by every establishment organ from the *Washington Post* to the Congressional Budget Office. Yet that's just what we now have—to the tune of $70 billion.

The most important political debate in Washington in 1999 will show that the U.S. public is now ready for something

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that was politically impossible when I arrived in D.C. in the early '80s: A makeover of the last of the New Deal relics—Social Security—into something more suitable to the era of free markets and personal responsibility. (We have started a new department in TAE to help you track this vital debate. See the inaugural SOCIAL SECURITY WATCH, written by Third Millenium co-founder Deroy Murdock, on page 73.) All kinds of things that we fall into the habit of thinking can never change *do* change, bringing recovery, when enough people have their viewpoint altered.

None of this is to say that happy days are here again. For one thing, within our cultural elite, American society is certainly sicker today than it was two, five, or ten years ago. Princeton recently offered a distinguished chair in Ethics to a philosopher who defends infanticide and argues against making moral distinctions between humans and fleas. Meanwhile, we've just had our first mainstream Hollywood film presenting a sympathetic view of pedophilia (Todd Solondz' twisted *Happiness*). This followed Hanna Rosin's print legitimization of pedophiles in *The New Republic* three years ago, and I expect that the rights of men-who-just-love-children will be one of the next causes of America's fervid liberationists.

A recent experience from my own life provides a more pedestrian example of how the abysmally low standards of our dominant intellectual and artistic elites continue to drizzle dirty rain down our collective necks. My wife and I decided to take our children to see the new big-screen release of *The Wizard of Oz*. What could be more wholesome than viewing a bright new computer-assisted print of that great old film? Well, the Hollywood idiots managed to make that offensive too—by running, just before the screening, 15 minutes of scummy previews of other films, featuring extended dialogue about sex, cybersex, daddy running off with another woman, divorce, and more sex. Very amusing to the single-digit children around us. The manager said she hated the previews too, but they come down from national headquarters.

Discouraging as this relentless unravelling among the culturati can be, it's important not to think that it represents the direction of mainstream public opinion. When I called law professor Richard Epstein to see if anything was happening in America's courtrooms similar to the turn-toward-the-better showing up in our community life, he used a metaphor that I think applies well to many parts of U.S. society today. He said "the system is overheated, but cooling down." In Epstein's legal world, the three-decade boilover of trivial lawsuits and insane rulings hasn't completely subsided, but it has crested. Sanity is returning. In mainstream America, much the same thing is happening. Cultural relativism will continue to be aggressively peddled in our campuses, art galleries, and theaters—but there are fewer buyers.

The gigantic "Yes, BUT..." in all that we're discussing here, of course, is the public's reaction to Bill Clinton. If average Americans are becoming more moral every day in every way, the skeptic will mutter, then why are a majority of them willing to tolerate Bill Clinton's vile character? That is, to say the least, a big,wriggly fly in the ointment for any argument that the country is turning a positive cultural corner.

I've puzzled over that, for I am as troubled by the lack of public outrage over Clinton's perfidy as anyone. It's a complicated subject but, for me, much of it boils down to this: You're more likely to understand Americans by watching what they *do* than what they *say*.

Opinions, responses to pollsters, even voting choices, are cheap. Actions (which are mostly what we document in this issue) are not. Six out of ten soccer moms may say Clinton's adultery doesn't really concern them. But you better believe if their own husbands acted similarly the hatchets would be swinging. I put much less stock on the public's abstract toleration for adultery in some distant fairy tale castle called the White House than I do on the fact that in their *own* lives they still say and show that they view adultery as a low and dirty deed.

Or take the fact that the number of babies actually being born to (*and* aborted by) unmarried women is falling crisply today. Oughtn't this be much more interesting to us than the appearance that every girl in *Cosmo* and some of the interns in Clinton's Oval Office can't seem to keep their drawers on? A large, hard (positive) reality trumps a narrower, more deceptive bit of (discouraging) symbolism.

Contemporary Americans are famous for refusing to judge other people's behavior (after all, our schools have trained them to be that way—or else!). But that's just a modern mannerism. When it comes to their own lives and the lives of people in their immediate circle, most Americans are still pretty ethically demanding. (As Chesterton said, there's nothing wrong with real Americans, it's the *ideal* American who's insufferable.) Any social observer who has to choose between our lip service and our real-life behavior would be well advised to go with our behavior if he wants to understand us truly.

Yes, there is a portion of the U.S. population that is rotten, refuses to accept any behavioral standards, and is perfectly satisfied with a likeminded President. They are a loud and powerful group, at least as potent as the cultural conservatives backlashing against them. As the *Wall Street Journal* put it a few months ago, "Two worlds now compete for primacy in American politics. One pleads for re-establishing commonly held rules of the road. The other insists that social and moral diversity has rendered such commonality impossible—and, as they like to add, get used to it."

But only a fraction of the majority who decided Clinton should be allowed to walk are apologists for his brand of amorality. The rest are people with decent standards and character who, to put it bluntly, decided to look the other way while the President slimed up the White House.

Many of us would feel better if these latter folks were simply acting on a conviction that Bill Clinton is innocent. But the fact is, most of them accept that 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is now occupied by a chronic liar, an out-of-control adulterer, an obstructer of justice, a draft dodger, an all-round morally challenged sleazeball. Unlike the openly amoral apologists, they think ill of Clinton's character, and wouldn't trust him near their children. Yet they have no problem with him being President. How can this be?

It may seem that a big chunk of middle America has turned nihilist, but I think I can show you there is actually a certain logic

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WIPE OFF THAT SCOWL AND START DIGGING A NEW TRENCHLINE.

THE FRONT IN THE CULTURE WAR JUST MOVED A NICE DISTANCE FORWARD.

to their view. For most Americans, you see, national politics is Never-Never-Land—as remote and unreal as an animated movie. Unless someone is stepping on them, they don't feel much exercised one way or the other about political wrangles. They treat politics, sensibly enough, about like dentistry—you attend to it as necessary to keep yourself healthy and free of pain, but you don't really want to mess with it any more than you have to.

Right now, Americans are feeling fat, happy, and ache-free. It's not only today's economic bounty but also the cultural improvements displayed in this magazine that make them feel this way. The public is not anxious to risk this tranquility and prosperity for the sake of political principle, particularly when the national media are doing their best to fuzzify the issues.

Americans (as conservatives sometimes forget when they go into their activist modes) are deeply skeptical of politics and government. They don't really credit Bill Clinton for today's national bloom—they don't think government has a lot to do with it one way or the other (and they are right). But they don't want to chance a big Washington imbroglio just to punish one of the characters in the D.C. fairy tale for his wickedness. They want to *forget* about D.C. and live their own lives.

I happen to believe this reaction is shortsighted, bordering on dishonorable, and potentially very bad for our nation. But it is not so hard to understand. After 30 years of seeing their happiness repeatedly cramped by some paroxysm originating on the Potomac, Americans don't want anybody rocking the boat. It's just Bill Clinton's dumb luck that he happens to be the boat.

It's terribly easy, especially for Washingtonians, to forget how alienated the average American feels from politics. Perhaps we *should* revere the presidency, believe it to be the most important post in the land, and aspire for our children to occupy it. But I've got news for you: Most Americans don't. The presidency is part of the federal government, something Americans don't romanticize in any way. They don't even believe the presidency is "the most powerful and important job in the world," as the news anchors like to say. In this too, they are correct. There are business moguls, scientists, authors, and financiers out there doing more to shape our society than Bill Clinton ever will.

Americans want stability, and, as much as possible, invisibility, from their government, so they can get on with the things that really concern them: their jobs, family making, self-improvement, religious practice, creative activities. I've come to believe—and I will admit there is an element of hope in my conviction—that America's frustrating reluctance to bring Bill Clinton to justice is at least not anything so troubling as a sign of widespread public corruption or amorality. The tune-out of everyday Americans is a reflection of their disdain for government and politics. It is, in other words, an expression of moral priorities—their preference for their individual quests over a collective political course that would be righteous but risky. We are free to disagree with that decision, but we can't say it's indefensible.

More importantly, we can't use this disappointment to accuse the American people of becoming morally rotten. Especially when there exist abundant data suggesting that the residents of our land are actually becoming *less* morally rotten. If the public isn't showing as much good sense in their political judgments as in their personal lives, well, better that than the reverse.

Most of all, conservatives mustn't allow the public's decision to go AWOL on punishing Clinton to blind us to today's swelling movement toward higher standards of behavior in areas closer to home. This may be the most significant development in U.S. society since the 1960s, and it needs to be nurtured, celebrated, and egged further along.

And this is definitely a parade conservatives ought to be leading. After all, it is they who first sounded the alarm, they who first urged solutions, they who have kept the high stakes of moral failure before the public eye. (See Charles Bray's take on this on page 56.)

I must say, I was surprised, and disappointed, that many of the prominent cultural conservatives whom I asked to comment on the trends portrayed on pages 36 to 51 turned me down. I believe that at least some of these individuals, after making careers out of ringing cultural alarm bells, may be having trouble assimilating this latest good news. As the poet Paul Valéry warned, we tend to dread precisely, but hope only vaguely.

If my feeling is right that many cultural conservatives are reluctant to hear this good news, that's a shame. For it was to a considerable extent their books and explanations and call to action that helped turn the tide of social decay. Right now they ought to be pointing out that the liberals in Congress all *opposed* welfare reform, and noting who was right. If they aren't willing to applaud this nascent recovery and build their next effort upon it, they will lose their intellectual credibility and public following.

The latest authoritative surveys by Roper Starch Worldwide reveal that the American public is currently expressing an historic, all-time high level of optimism over the future of our nation. This is not just some selfish reaction to fat paychecks; it is also a rejoicing over the damping down of crime, drugs, illegitimacy, welfare, and other plagues that this issue of TAE highlights. If conservatives fail to recognize and share in that public joy, they will find themselves cut off from the only allies who count—America's earnest and naturally decent middle classes.

So wipe off that scowl, give your hands a clap or two, then grab a shovel and start digging a new trenchline. The front in the culture war has just moved a nice distance forward.

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- ☐ **It Takes A Marriage** Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Michael & Diane Medved, Ben Stein, Florence King, and others in defense of matrimony. (M/J '96)
- ☐ **Who Are America's Religious Conservatives?** A surprising look, with James Dobson, Fred Barnes, Marvin Olasky, Glenn Loury. (N/D '95)

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Statelights

At the State University of New York's Binghamton campus, freshman indoctrination includes the P.C. games "Cultural Pursuit" and "Wheel of Oppression." ··· In Singapore, House of **Mao** restaurants are staffed by waiters in People's Liberation Army uniforms who serve Mao fajitas and Mao burgers. ❧ **Samuel Gompers**, a founder of the American labor movement, "called the concept of government-provided social insurance 'in its essence undemocratic,'" a recent Cato Institute study notes. And sure enough, "Harvard economist **Martin Feldstein** has estimated that if Social Security were privatized, the concentration of wealth in America would be reduced by half." ···"Higher earners put in longer days on average than those with lower incomes," reports the *Wall Street Journal,* a complete reversal from ages past. ··· The *Journal* also reports that the richest 1 percent of Americans, who earn 16 percent of American income, paid nearly 33 percent of all individual income taxes in 1996, up from 25 percent ten years ago. ··· In 23 percent of American couples, the wife earned more than her husband in 1996, Department of Labor figures show. Only 16 percent of wives earned more in 1981. ❧ Prices for mint-condition lunch boxes at Christie's auctions: A '63 "Jetsons" $750, a '52 "**Underdog**" $900, a '68 "Star Trek" $1,200, and a "**Dudley Do-Right**" (with Thermos) $2,000. ❧ Professional day care for home-alone dogs is booming, the *Washington Post* reports. ··· The government workers' union AFSCME has begun organizing child care workers in the private sector. ❧ A new sports malady, "golf ball liver," is caused by licking golf balls that have pesticide on them. Doctors recommend using the ball washer instead. ❧ The new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts told reporters that members of Congress haven't criticized the Endowment to him, but instead have asked, "How do we enlarge the reach of the agency?" ❧ **Herman Badillo**, a powerful Bronx Democrat, became the first Puerto Rican congressman in Washington in 1974 and served four terms. This summer he switched parties: "I have felt increasingly that the Democratic party takes large portions of its constituency for granted."

Followers of conspiracy theorist **Lyndon LaRouche** recently protested on the Capitol steps, chanting "Save **Clinton**, jail **Starr**, let's go back to FDR." ❧ Most Americans believe that at most one out of ten of us will suffer at some point from a sexually transmitted disease, according to a Kaiser Foundation survey. The actual figure is about one out of four, the Centers for Disease Control say. ❧ **Diana Meeks**, 25, was told by a doctor to take her two-month-old immediately to the hospital because he was starving to death. The child died while she stopped to have a manicure. A Chicago court convicted her of involuntary manslaughter. ❧ "If the death of **Matthew Shepard** can be laid at **Trent Lott**'s feet," asks pundit **Jonah Goldberg**, "why can't **Al** [**Gore**] take some heat for the Unabomber? There's a lot more resemblance between Gore's book and the Unabomber's treatise than between anything that Lott has ever done and what those murderers in Wyoming did." ❧ The Business Council of New York State surveyed 148 companies; 44 percent reported the skills of their newly hired high-school graduates were "poor" or "very poor." ··· A survey by KPMG Peat Marwick finds 81 percent of college students believe they will be more successful than their parents. ··· They'd better be: College prices rose again this year at more than double inflation. ··· Surveying college students on their use of credit cards, a new study found 59 percent say they pay their "monthly balances in full and on time," and 82 percent say "they maintain a balance of $1,000 or less," the *Boston Globe* reports. ❧ The American Society of Clinical Oncology surveyed 3,200 of its cancer-fighting doctors and found the proportion supporting physician-assisted suicide for the terminally ill has fallen from 45 to 22 percent in just two years. ❧ The superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park told the Arizona *Daily Sun* he "makes no apologies" for refusing to consider white males for 26 summer jobs. ❧ Mayor **Stephen Goldsmith** complains that "as little as 30 cents out of every dollar spent on education in Indianapolis actually make their way to the places where children learn. The rest is lost in the layers of bureaucracy." ❧ "Stop Repeat Offenders—Don't Re-elect Them!" reads a recent bumper sticker. ❧ A recent poll found 75 percent of Americans believe their fellow citizens are less polite than ten years ago. ··· All babies are "born behaving like rock stars staying in a hotel: sleeping odd hours, trashing the place, and screaming for service.... We have an entire generation now that grew up being taught nothing different," **Miss Manners** warns.

—SW

MUELLER

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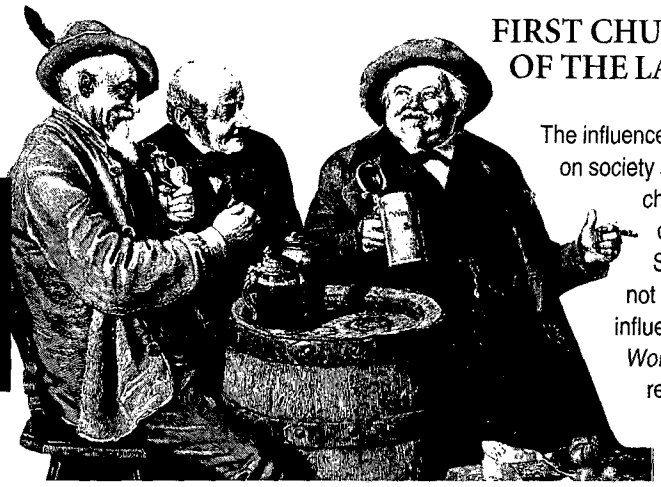
SCAN



FIRST CHURCH OF THE LAGERS

The influence of churches on society and society on churches is complex. Sometimes it's not clear who is influencing whom. *World* magazine reported not long ago on a church in England that seeks relevance by accommodating rather than resisting cultural trends:

"Since people in today's culture like to sleep in on the Sabbath, meetings are held on Tuesday nights. To get around the church's stodgy moral image, smoking and drinking are permitted during the service. Since today's generation feels uncomfortable in a traditional church building, they meet in a pub. Since no one sits in rows anymore, they sit around tables. Since people do not do group singing anymore, there are no hymns. Since people today are not used to being just talked at, there is no sermon. Since people today do not recognize authority figures, there is no minister. They sit around and decide for themselves what they would like to discuss."

As writer Gene Edward Veith concluded, "How such a church service is different from what goes on anyway in a London pub is not clear."

HISTORIANS IN DEFENSE OF THE LIBERAL CONSPIRACY . . .

On the Friday before this November's Tuesday election, a group referring to themselves gravely as "Historians in Defense of the Constitution" bought a splashy, $55,000 full-page ad in the *New York Times*. In it, the signers used portentous language to "deplore the present drive to impeach the President," trading on their institutional affiliations (Yale, Princeton, Harvard, MIT, etc.) to create the impression that only someone who didn't understand or love his country would be stupid enough to distract poor Mr. Clinton from "the public business" any longer.

Fair enough. Academics have been acting like political hacks for decades (though a big lobbying effort four days before a national election is an especially crass example of this). But the resulting news stories missed one aspect of the affair: the invaluable assistance these "historians speaking as historians"—as one organizer put it—received from People for the American Way (PAW), a left-wing activist group that was simultaneously flooding the nation's airwaves with ads supporting the President's re-election.

Though the historians neglected to mention it in their ad, or in their press releases, or at their press conference, they were only able to publish their *Times* ad because PAW's tax-exempt foundation purchased it for them and served as the receiver for the donations that paid for it. The mailing address given in the historians' ad is actually the Washington office of PAW, though nobody in the major media seems to have bothered to discover this. Somehow we suspect that if 400 non-liberal scholars took out such an ad and listed an address that in fact belonged to, say, the Christian Coalition, the information might come out in news stories.

Although professors Arthur Schlesinger and Sean Wilentz organized the ad as a way to stimulate "debate," now that the Democrats have fared well in balloting they told *TAE* the group has no further plans to foster discussion on this still-live issue.

Another telling coincidence occurred eight days after the ad was published. This was the Saturday after the election, where President Clinton celebrated his electoral escape by handing out his "national medals for arts and humanities" at a Washington ceremony.

Turns out that not one, not two, but fully three of his medal recipients were historians from the (*high*-minded, *strictly* non-partisan) "Historians in Defense of the Constitution."

How cozy.

. . . AND RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS IN DEFENSE OF GENUINE REPENTANCE

In stark contrast to "Historians in Defense of the Constitution," which did its best to influence the '98 election in a hidden alliance with a left-wing political lobby, a group of religious scholars critical of the President's behavior took a different tack. This genuinely independent group of academics hasn't even named itself yet and consciously chose to utter its thoughts on the nation's leading political debate *after* the election, inviting continued discussion "in an atmosphere of scholarly integrity and civility without partisan bias."

A week or so after the polls closed, these 130-plus religion scholars issued a declaration protesting "the manipulation of religion and the debasing of moral language" by Clinton apologists. Some of the scholars in question twice voted for Clinton, and the group takes no stand on what actions Congress and the President should take. But the signers are united by concern over the abuse of religious ideas surrounding the President's admission of wrongdoing.

"When the President continues to deny any liability for the sins he has confessed,

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this suggests that the public display of repentance was intended to avoid political disfavor," notes the declaration. Jean Bethke Elshtain of the University of Chicago Divinity School warns in an accompanying document that "Forgiveness is not a political term. Forgiveness has somehow become sentimentalized, even vulgarized, into the notion that we can't make judgments about people's behavior."

Other comments which signers have posted on the group's Web site (www.moral-crisis.org) are equally blunt. The Reverend Frank Hughes, an Episcopal priest, New Testament scholar, and two-time Clinton-voter, declares, "I do not believe that it is best for the nation that he continue in office as President of the United States," given that any military officer who "perpetrated the sexual misconduct that he did with a 25-year-old subordinate" would be out of a job.

Signer Daniel Ritchie points to a paradox: "The very people who criticized the religious right in the '80s for putting the Christian faith in the service of a political agenda are doing just that" by trumpeting Clinton's supposedly religious "repentance." Another signer eager to respect religious/legal distinctions suggests the President's recourse to private religious counseling is a diversion: "The forum in which Mr. Clinton sinned by lying was a [secular] public forum, with its own worthy and up-to-now uncontroversial set of public penalties."

A separate newspaper interview conducted recently with three liberal female clergy provides more evidence that many Americans of non-Republican stripes are unwilling to absolve the President as quickly as religious figures like Jesse Jackson, Philip Wogaman, Billy Graham, and James Wall have urged. "He won't call it what it is, and he doesn't sound fully repentant. I'm all for forgiveness. I'm all for grace. But not cheap grace," says the Reverend Barbara Sterling Willson of Geddes, New York.

"When I hear 'forgive' I also hear 'forget,'" adds Presbyterian minister Jeanne Radak. "I think there should be consequences for his behavior. It's like dealing with children. You forgive them. But they still must be held accountable for what they did." Willson concludes, "he should resign. If he needs help, he should get it, take care of his family, and let the country get on with the important issues."

SHE HATES WHAT SHE TEACHES

One academic not likely to join a group "in defense of the Constitution" is Robin West, a prominent feminist and professor of constitutional law at Georgetown University. One of her rants, as quoted in David Horowitz's new book, *The Politics of Bad Faith*:

"The political history of the United States that culminated and is reflected in the constitutional text is in large measure a history of almost unthinkable brutality toward slaves, genocidal hatred of Native Americans, racist devaluations of nonwhites and nonwhite cultures, sexist devaluation of women, and a less than admirable attitude of submissiveness to the authority of unworthy leaders in all spheres of government and public life. Why should we bind or constrain our political argument, to say nothing of our political choices, by texts produced by this history of ruthlessness; of brutality; and of mindless, infantile, and at times psychotic, numbing wrath?"

LOWER THAN AN AMBULANCE-CHASER

While President Clinton's defenders think *his* perjury doesn't merit punishment, it's worth noting that under long-standing legal practices, *any* practicing lawyer caught lying to a court in any capacity is likely to be disbarred.

The Rules of Professional Conduct that bind lawyers in Arkansas, for instance, call for disbarment of any attorneys who "engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation." The Rules also forbid "conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice," and when assessing the moral fitness of a lawyer even "matters of personal morality, such as adultery and comparable offenses, that have no specific connection to fitness for the practice of law" must be considered. Virtually every state has similar rules.

In short, Bill Clinton, a Yale law graduate, would probably be disbarred anywhere in the United States for his recent behavior and sworn testimony. He lacks the ethical standards to be an ambulance-chaser.

No one would argue that a lawyer who lies under oath should avoid disbarment simply because he is doing a "great job" for his clients. One would have thought that the President—who appoints every federal judge in the country—has a much higher duty than an average lawyer to tell the truth and uphold the law.

Other politicians who have perjured themselves or obstructed justice have been disbarred. The New York City Bar found Richard Nixon morally unfit to be a lawyer, even though his Watergate misdeeds did not occur in his capacity as a lawyer.

More recently, in 1996 the Georgia Supreme Court disbarred former Congressman Patrick Swindall for perjury to a grand jury involving a house loan—

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even though Swindall ultimately decided against taking the loan and his perjury was not committed in his official capacity as either a lawyer or a congressman. The Court noted, "there are aggravating factors in this case, including Swindall's dishonest motive, pattern of misconduct, multiple offenses, and refusal to acknowledge the wrongful nature of his conduct, all of which militate in favor of greater discipline. Finally, we note that Swindall's violations warrant a severe level of discipline in light of the fact that he occupied a public office."

What sort of standard, then, should be applied to the nation's commander-in-chief?

—Kenneth Lee, a student at Harvard Law School, writes regularly for The American Enterprise.

THE RETURN OF FEMININE SEXUALITY?

After a couple of grim decades in which the only sexual philosophy either sex could fashionably admit to was some variation of Hugh Hefner's personal ethic, there is change in the air.

The catalog of January '99 releases for publishing giant Simon and Schuster lists *three* new books that promise to give heartburn to Erica Jong and other evangelists for female trampiness. There is twentysomething Wendy Shalit's *A Return to Modesty*, which updates the ancient insight that women end up with more dignity, happiness, and power when they practice sexual reserve than when they "put out." There is thirtysomething Danielle Crittenden's *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us,* tearing apart feminist orthodoxy on love and life. There is even *Sensual Celibacy* by Donna Marie Williams, which, noting that "more women are saying no today to casual sex and holding off on a physical relationship until they get to know their partners better," promises a "10-step plan for using voluntary periods of sexual abstinence to recharge your self-respect, identify what you're looking for in a partner, and strengthen emotional bonds."

What's next, a report documenting that rest and fresh air are actually good for you after all?

PROGRESS, AND PERIL, ON SCHOOL REFORM

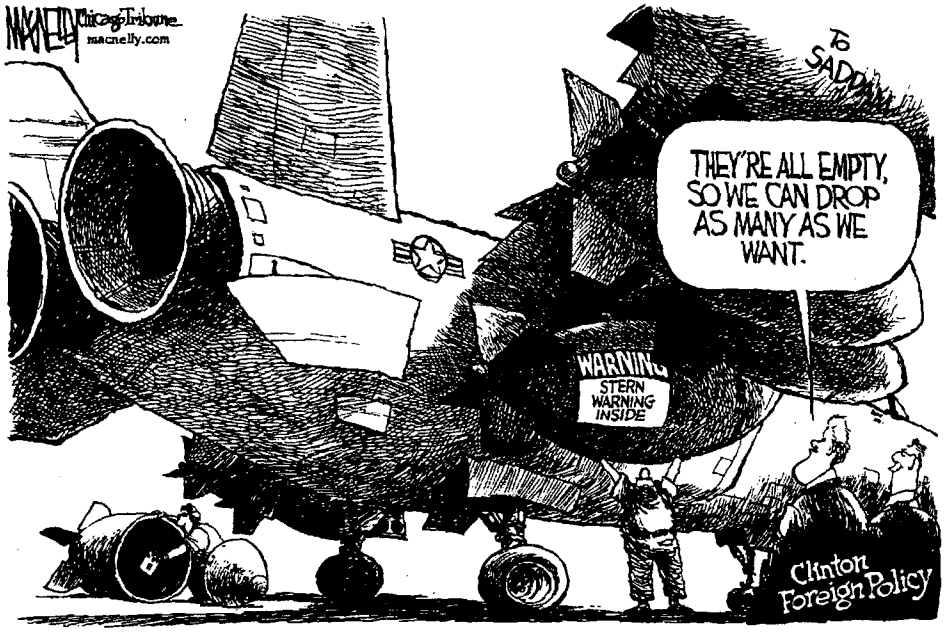
The Massachusetts teachers' union crossed an important new line in November, reports Mike Antonucci of the Education Intelligence Agency. Taking a page from reformers, the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers (MFT) suggested that college degrees in "education" be eliminated and that teachers instead use their undergraduate years to learn the subject matter they will be teaching (math teachers to major in math, French teachers to study French, etc.). "We need to make sure teachers are prepared for a particular subject," said MFT president Kathleen Kelley.

Unfortunately, this commonsensical view has little following within most of the education establishment. The *Washington Post* ran an interesting letter in September in which a man who wanted to devote himself to teaching high school math described the obstacles thrown up before him by public school officials in Northern Virginia: M. L. McHugh has a bachelor's degree in naval engineering, a master's degree in mechanical engineering, and 20 additional credit hours (at a 4.0 average) of graduate training. He was a professor of naval science at Boston University, a visiting professor at MIT, and commanded two nuclear submarines and two shore establishments during his years in the service.

When this gentleman applied to every middle school and high school principal in the region of Fairfax County, Virginia, seeking a math position, he received a total of only one reply—a form letter. No doubt the local schools are glutted with gifted explainers of trigonometry and calculus. In frustration, McHugh finally embarked on another career.

Meanwhile, the teachers' unions on the other side of the country have been utterly obstructionist, another item from the Education Intelligence Agency warns. Over the last five years, EIA notes, the prospects for school reform in California have seriously dimmed, as the anti-reformist California Teachers' Association (CTA) has waged fierce political battles to successfully defeat Governor Wilson's education initiative, defeat a voucher initiative, resist a voter-mandated end to bilingual education, defeat boat-rocking Republican candidates for state office, and generally become the 800-pound gorilla of California politics.

The recent election of union pal Gray Davis as governor, combined with Democratic takeovers in the state assembly and senate, completes the union's grab for power in California. "With no campaign opponents left standing, CTA could bring its entire political weight to bear" during the next couple years, observes the Sacramento-based Antonucci.



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BOOKS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

The Shape of the River, a new book defending affirmative action by William G. Bowen, former president of Princeton, and Derek Bok, former president of Harvard, has won lavish praise from the liberal establishment. And it may end up contributing importantly to the affirmative action debate. But oddly absent in the hoopla is any mention of an important fact: Earlier writings by Bowen, the principal author, have turned out to be disastrously flawed.

A decade ago Bowen, a Great Society-era economist, wrote a book called *Prospects for Faculty in the Arts and Sciences: A Study of Factors Affecting Demand and Supply, 1987 to 2012,* co-authored with Julie Ann Sosa. Like *The Shape of the River,* the book made headlines. "Shortages Seen for Faculties for the 1990s," shouted the front page of the *New York Times,* which quoted Bowen declaring a "need to increase overall production of new Ph.D.s by two-thirds."

Backed by 114 tables, charts, and graphs, *Prospects for Faculty in the Arts and Sciences* presented chilling projections of low supply and high demand in academic discipline after discipline. In related campus lectures, Bowen offered graduate students the impression that they were about to join "one of the most dynamic growth industries of the late twentieth century," as R. M. Douglas, a history graduate student in one of his audiences wrote. "Even the most pessimistic of his scenarios suggested that from 1997 onwards, the demand in all fields for new Ph.D.s would exceed supply, with by far the greatest shortages arising in those traditional Cinderella disciplines, the humanities and social sciences." By 1997, Bowen claimed three positions out of every ten on offer would go unfilled.

In retrospect it would be difficult to find an example of research so spectacularly inaccurate, so widely disseminated, and so lamentable in practical effect. We are now in the period where Bowen and Sosa projected truly severe shortages. Yet reports abound of hundreds of applications for each vacancy in history, literature, foreign languages, the fine arts, sociology, psychology.

And statistics cannot convey the deeper damage done by misleading young people and their parents. There's no way to measure the moral and psychological costs incurred when earnest youths, encouraged by false hopes, invest years in a fruitless Ph.D.

In the debate over the many factual and interpretative claims in *The Shape of the River,* the historic reliability of William Bowen's earlier research needs to be considered. Too often, educational leaders fail to accept accountability for their work. After all, *Prospects for Faculty in the Arts and Sciences* remains in print, without any of the warnings its inaccuracy cries out for.

*—**William Craig Rice,** a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, has taught most recently at Harvard University.*

AS OHIO GOES . . .

The great battleground in today's political landscape is the Midwest. "Tell me who wins Ohio in the 2000 presidential election and I'll tell you who wins the White House," says one veteran election-watcher. Despite the unexpectedly weak showing of Republicans in the '98 elections, one GOP-favorable trend has gone unnoticed: The Midwest is increasingly Republican.

For example, although Republicans failed to achieve a net gain in U.S. Senate seats, three of the four new GOP Senators this year won in Midwestern and border states. They captured seats long held by Democrats in Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky. Until the 1990s the Midwest was about evenly split between the parties. In 1984, for instance, the region voted 58 to 41 percent for Reagan over Mondale, but gave only 50 percent of its votes to Republican House candidates, and predominantly elected Democratic U.S. senators. And that was an above-average year for Republicans.

Then in 1994 the region voted heavily Republican, and in '98 House Republicans garnered 53 percent of the vote to the Democrats' 47 percent—far better than the GOP ever did in the '80s.

In other regions, the 1998 elections mostly ratified the parties' current positions: Democrats picked up governorships and Senate seats in the Northeast and Pacific Coast, where they have been doing well in presidential elections, while GOP control of the South and Rocky Mountain states continued. (Exceptions proved the rule: the Democrat who knocked Republican Lauch Faircloth out of a North Carolina Senate seat is far to the right of any likely Democratic presidential nominee.)

Both parties, then, need the Midwest to take the White House. You'll know how seriously Vice President Al Gore worries about the '98 returns when you see him canceling stops in Hollywood and Silicon Valley to court residents in Chicago, Cleveland, and Columbus.

*—**Jeremy Pope** is a research assistant at the American Enterprise Institute.*

THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY BECOMES A KINGMAKER

A new lobby has recently joined the teachers' unions and the trial lawyers in the small club of election-swinging superpowers: The gambling industry. Like the other two groups, this one strongly favor Democrats.

The gambling industry's attachment to American pocketbooks has become shockingly strong. According to industry publications, annual revenues for lotteries alone average more than $340 per U.S. household. Lottery players often graduate to the riverboats, video slot machines, Indian casinos, and other "games" now mushrooming across the country.

This is leaving the owners of gambling operations with huge piles of disposable cash, and they have not been shy about using it to influence the political process. The *New York Times* reports that the gambling industry put $85 million into political donations this fall. With that,

BASE BALL

It wasn't just anemic conservative turnout that hurt Republican candidates in the November election. It was also a more active kind of disaffection: While fully two-thirds of all Americans identifying themselves as religious conservatives voted Republican in 1994, in 1998 the figure fell to just 54 percent, according to Christian Coalition exit polls.

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they helped topple two southern governors and influence countless other races. Gambling interests in Missouri outspent opponents 70 to 1. In South Carolina, pro-lottery groups rented every available van and bus in a massive get-out-the-vote effort. (See page 30.)

Of course the gambling lucre has to come from someplace. A recent publication from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis suggests where. Economist Michelle Clark Neely finds that "bankruptcy rates in counties surrounding casino areas do tend to be much higher than elsewhere." Research suggests that the spread of gambling is an important factor in the current skyrocketing of personal bankruptcy rates—up 56 percent nationwide just from 1993 to 1997.

Gambling advocates prefer to emphasize other results. The St. Joseph, Missouri *News Press* has begun printing phoned-in subscriber opinions on the issues of the day—obviously without editing and mercifully without attribution—and callers weighed in often this fall on the hottest issue on the Missouri ballot in November: Amendment 9, which legalized Missouri's "boats in moats."

"Boats in Moats" are casinos located in man-made ditches in the general vicinity of the Missouri or Mississippi Rivers. The "boats" have been operating in a legal limbo since a 1997 Missouri Supreme Court decision found that when Missouri voters approved River Boat Casinos in 1994, they assumed the boats would be located on rivers.

No doubt the most original phone call in favor of Amendment 9 was made by a disabled St. Joseph resident, father of two, who urged a yes vote. Before the St. Joe boat in a moat opened, he explained, his wife worked as a stripper, but after, she was able to secure a much better job at the casino. So a no vote would expose his wife to a very drafty profession. His argument must have struck a chord, because voters approved Boats in Moats by a wide margin.

Missouri's decade-long slide toward easier and easier gambling rules has been greased by huge political contributions to state politicians. The next target of the casinos in Missouri will be the so-called boarding restrictions and the $500 loss limits that the casinos must enforce. Anti-gambling state senators from rural areas are unlikely to let these rules be changed by legislation; so the casinos will probably buy another initiative drive, and gambling will appear on the ballot for the fifth time in the past decade.

This last election, the casinos sent every voter in the state a mailing touting the flow of gambling revenues to the voter's local school district. This same pattern of wrapping gambling inducements in the cloak of education was followed in other states as well.

But I think a better view of the connection between gambling and kids comes from a vivid image my family and I took in during our summer vacation in Montana—which is now overrun by "casinos" that are just tawdry little rooms, containing banks of video lottery machines, attached to nearly every gas station, hotel, and convenience store. The sign I remember was mounted over the casino tucked into the corner of a convenience store in a hardscrabble town in far north-central Montana. It read simply: "Please do not leave children unattended while in the casino."

*—**Blake Hurst** is a* TAE *contributing writer.*

ANOTHER UNION WORKER TEAR-JERKER

The New York Times profiled Boston Celtics point guard Kenny Anderson recently to show how the NBA players' strike is harming the way of life of the players (*average* salary $2.6 million annually).

Mr. Anderson is fast approaching a crisis where he may have to sell one of his eight cars (the cheapest of which cost him $50,000). Just keeping his fleet insured costs him $75,000 a year.

Most of Anderson's other expenses—like the $12,500 monthly rent on his Beverly Hills home, his $120,000 per year in pocket money, his $86,400 in annual payments to women other than his wife for support of daughters sired by him—just cannot be trimmed.

And you thought you had cash flow problems.

AMERICA IS SICK!

A 12-foot-tall Statue of Liberty was recently seen floating down Liberty Avenue in Pittsburgh, complete with an intravenous drip in her arm. The message? America is sick! On Grant Street around the same time, four gay men were talking

IF MEN REALLY RULED THE WORLD

- Instead of an expensive engagement ring, you could present your wife-to-be with a giant foam hand that said, "You're #1!"
- Valentine's Day would be moved to February 29 so it would only occur in leap years.
- It'd be considered harmless fun to gather 30 friends, put on horned helmets, and go pillage a nearby town.
- Tanks would be far easier to rent.
- Garbage would take itself out.
- Instead of beer belly, you'd get beer biceps.
- Telephones would automatically cut off after 30 seconds of conversation.
- It would be perfectly legal to steal a sports car, as long as you returned it the following day with a full tank of gas.
- The victors in any athletic competition would get to kill and eat the losers.
- The only show opposite Monday Night Football would be Monday Night Football from a Different Camera Angle.

—from the Internet underground

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THE HYPOCRITIC ARTS

Speech by President Clinton on receiving a report on teen pregnancy, June 13, 1996:

There is no advanced country in the world that has anything like the teen pregnancy problem that we do, and we have got to do something about it. We have got to give these young people opportunity. We have to insist that they take more responsibility. We must help them to make good choices....

The other thing we have to do is to take seriously the role in this problem of older men. It's a sad fact that half of all the underage mothers in this country were made pregnant by a man who was in his twenties or even older, someone who has no business taking advantage of an underage girl.... It is time for [laws] to be enforced so that older men who prey on underage women are held accountable.

about not selling out to corporate America. It was Pittsburgh's double convention weekend—the National Convention of the U.S. Labor Party and the National Conference for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Movement.

On top of parading a languishing Miss Liberty through town, Labor Party delegates demanded a world of three-day weekends, 32-hour work weeks, higher wages, more benefits, more government, universal health care, fewer imports, and mandatory pensions. No one seemed to consider whether requiring higher pay for less work would produce greater inflation and more unemployment, as it has in Italy or France, where taxes now take more than half of the average worker's paycheck and unemployment runs at four times the U.S. rate.

"How can labor be liberated by fewer jobs, higher taxes, and more inflation?" I asked a delegate. Her answer: "We support a constitutional amendment that guarantees a job for everyone." How simple. Something like the former Soviet Union: everyone pretends to work and the government pretends to pay them. At the end of the day, unfortunately, economic reality hits when there's nothing on the shelves, nothing to distribute but equal misery.

Michael Moore, anti-capitalist film maker and a star at the Labor conference, spent much of his time apologizing to the conventioneers about his $1.27 million penthouse on Central Park. His apologies were reminiscent of the days when China's most productive peasants were forced to repent to the Communist authorities for their unequal talent and incomes. Moore explained that he gives away half his money and still has the same wife. The penthouse, he confessed, buying the collectivist notion that it was anyone's business, "costs a boatload of money" because it's in Manhattan. By day's end, Moore had turned over $10,000 in royalties from his latest book to the Labor party's education fund. The money, one assumes, will be spent to teach the next generation about the evils of achievement.

Interestingly, at the Conference of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Movement it was much the same Workers-of-the-World-Unite bravado. At the opening plenary, hardy cheers greeted AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson's attack on the Log Cabin Republicans, an organization for gay Republicans. "They," said Thompson, speaking of gays who dress too well and earn too much, "should be called Split-level Republicans."

Taking economic victimology a step further, Yale University professor Cathy Cohen proclaimed that liberation means more than "inclusion" in a bad system. Like any good Marxist, Cohen prompted the delegates to keep an eye on gay business owners, lest some lesbian capitalist charge too much for a cappuccino. It went on like that, mocking corporate sponsors and ending with the White House's Virginia Apuzzo, Assistant to the President for Management and Administration, declaring that she didn't struggle as a lesbian for decades just to become a "market niche." God forbid that Coors or Nike might pile up even more profits through target marketing.

After the speeches, I asked a group of delegates if anyone at the conference knew anything about economics. No answer. "My press packet says this conference is about hate crimes, civil rights, discrimination," I said, "why's every speech about capitalism?" Finally, one young man spoke up. "It was the same at college," he said. "I joined a gay group and all they talked about was socialism." I should have asked the delegates if they thought the cure for AIDS would come from a socialist bureaucracy or a capitalist company.

But not every speaker at the conference championed leftist economics. Rich Tafel, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, presented the results of his new survey showing voters don't want politicians to pick on gays. His recommendation? The Republican leadership should get back to its economic message.

My recommendation? The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force should skip the socialism and get back to its human rights message.

*—**Ralph R. Reiland** is associate professor of economics at Robert Morris College in Pittsburgh.*

THE COFFEE BARS MUST BE GETTING CROWDED IN PALO ALTO & SEATTLE

What is it about computer weenies that makes them so opposed to sharing the world with other people? Despite the fact that global birthrates have tumbled to historic lows, high-tech philanthropists tend to be almost obsessively focused on anti-population and related environmentalist causes. For instance, the Packard Foundation (stocked with Hewlett-Packard cash) recently announced it was giving $333 million—more than most *countries* contribute—to international projects in support of contraceptives, abortion clinics, "safe sex" campaigns, and other efforts to reduce family sizes around the world.

The Packard Foundation funded 109 population-control projects last year. Among the efforts it has bankrolled: A quarter-million dollars for abortion training in Ethiopia and Uganda, and a half-million dollars to promote "morning-after pills" in the state of Washington.

The other part of the Hewlett-

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Packard fortune, residing in the Hewlett Foundation, has likewise been directed into numerous population control projects by Hewlett family members.

Yet another computer tycoon pouring millions into anti-population efforts is Bill Gates. Earlier this year he announced a $1.7 million donation to the U.N. population control agency. The year before he gave $2.25 million to found an institute for training family planners.

Paul Allen, the multi-billionaire who co-founded Microsoft with Gates, has lavished money on environmentalist and anti-population efforts too. He, like these other billionaires, has also spent lots of money building private cocoons where he can enjoy nature without any other humans around to clutter things up. Recently Allen bought an entire Puget Sound peninsula and razed the camp for children it contained so he could build four summer homes for his family on the 385-acre spread.

Ah, solitude.

CRIME IS CRIME

"I detest the hate-crimes statutes," a Florida cop tells us. "If you give one victim more value than another because of a certain standard of sex, orientation, race, whatever, you cheapen the significance of crimes against other victims. Also, putting 'hate crimes' in a special category becomes a defense argument for a lesser sentence in other cases. Killing a white, male, rich victim suddenly doesn't carry the same punishment as, say, a gay, black, female.

"Worse, this country won't actually follow hate crime statutes when the perpetrator is black and the victim's white. Two of my friends in another department were assigned a series of armed robberies where young black males were attacking elderly white women at malls. The suspects were finally caught and interviewed. They all proudly stated they targeted the women for two reasons: One, the women were easy prey and often had valuables. Two, they wanted to show these 'white women' they had reason to be afraid of 'the black man.'

"As the suspects gave taped confessions, my friend remembers thinking, 'If this doesn't fit the new hate crime statute, nothing does.' They were charged with robbery and the enhanced hate-crime penalty. But the state attorneys never filed the hate charge. They never said why, but none of us can ever remember a case where the statute was filed against a minority for victimizing a white person, even though we've all run into this mindset several times.

"The unequal application of hate crimes laws does nothing but complicate law enforcement and drive a wedge deeper into the society where we were all once proudly called Americans."

CHARACTER WITNESS

"Do me a favor," says the gravelly voiced Howard Coble, as he leans across his desk. One might guess this is how a Republican who sits a few seats away in seniority from Henry Hyde on the House Judiciary Committee segues into telling you his next appointment has arrived and your interview is over. That would be wrong. "Walk me to the end of the hall. I've got to take a leak. This coffee's runnin' all through me."

Coble is a man as distinctive as the area he represents—the Piedmont region of North Carolina, including Lexington, the town that produces a world-famous tomato-based pork barbecue that can never quite be replicated elsewhere.

While he stops short of following LBJ's technique of holding meetings while he's sitting on the toilet (Coble's too much of a gentlemen for that; he actually lets you wait outside in the hallway), the Congressman is reminiscent of that brand of bona fide Southern character in Washington. The South once raised up many such politicians—Sam Ervin, Richard Russell, Huey Long. Today, as the nation becomes increasingly homogenized, they're a rare commodity. Last fall's election saw another casualty, when North Carolina's hog-farming Senator Lauch Faircloth was knocked off by a 44-year-old plaintiff's lawyer who blow dries his hair.

Coble, a 68-year-old bachelor who is a Mason, relishes his chances to provoke those who can't sleep knowing that somewhere someone is having a good time. The Architect of the Capitol recently telephoned to say he'd received a complaint about Coble's cigar smoke. "I'm sure it was a member of Congress," he told *TAE* editor John Meroney. "I said, 'It's too bad. I can smoke in my office.'"

Ever since last winter, when Monica Lewinsky became the most famous intern in America, Coble's committee has been the place to watch on the Hill. "We had French television come into our office. I said to the announcer, 'I'm sure all my constituents in Paris will enjoy seeing this.' And five hours later, a Carolina co-ed from Greensboro called and said, 'I was in a café in Paris and just saw Howard on TV.'"

Coble tells the Parisians just what he tells those who live in High Point: He's never seen a politician quite like Bill Clinton. "The guy's a magician. I was going through the airport shortly after this intern story broke and somebody said, 'Well, this is it for Clinton.' I said, 'Don't count on it.'"

On this day, Coble is questioning the curious timing of the DNA study that seems to confirm Thomas Jefferson's alleged affair with his slave Sally Hemings, released the weekend before the election. One report conveniently said it showed Jefferson as a "'90s kind of guy," and that if Bill Clinton's favorite President could end up on Mount Rushmore, despite being sexually involved with a subordinate, it put Clinton's conduct in a different light.

"They don't bother to say Jefferson was widowed at the time," Coble notes. Nor do they mention that Hemings was the half-sister of his wife. Or that it was a 38-year relationship. "That's a glaring distinction. Jefferson was single. Clinton's married. And so far as I know, Jefferson never lied under oath about it. They're cleverly skirting the fact that this guy committed perjury. And there are people who are behind bars as a result of perjury."

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THAT DEVIL MADE HIM DO IT

Our entry for Most Imaginative Justification of the Lewinsky affair comes from President Clinton himself, as reported in the New York Times.

"So intense is Mr. Clinton's obsession with Mr. Starr that he has gone so far as to tell several members of his administration that the prosecutor was partly to blame for his affair with Lewinsky, according to an official who heard the remarks. Mr. Clinton told these associates that he was so angry about the intrusiveness of Mr. Starr's inquiries that he sought comfort in a relationship with Ms. Lewinsky."

THANK GOODNESS FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS WHO KNOW WHEN TO GET TOUGH

Jordan Locke was recently suspended for bringing an ax into a Pittsburgh public school.

Mind you, the axe was plastic, and only five inches long. It was part of the firefighter costume worn on Halloween by Jordan, who is five years old.

Jordan broke a district policy that prohibits toy weapons. The school superintendent and school board president apologized when local firefighters protested that an axe is actually a tool.

Coble finds himself fighting to drive home the importance of the rule of law on a committee not known for restraint. By the end of Ken Starr's appearance back in November, Maxine Waters, under the blare of the klieg lights, suggested it was Starr who should be hauled up for perjury. Fearing more of the same, Coble doesn't relish the prospect of dragging the hearings out. At this writing, he does expect the committee will send articles of impeachment to the House.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTARIANISM

From a TAE *interview with Bret Schundler, the Republican mayor of Jersey City, New Jersey.*

TAE: On economic matters, you're libertarian. You're also a devout Christian. Is there a conflict?

SCHUNDLER: Without the values that come from the Judeo-Christian tradition that America has been directly founded on, you don't have freedom. The axiomatic values that are at the base of any code of law are all statements of faith.

The belief, for instance, that people have equal rights and that it's inappropriate for one group to try to take away the freedom of another person, make him a slave—you can't prove that by science. That is a direct statement of faith which is based on a particular religious value, religious in the sense that it's not provable. It is a statement of one's personal beliefs. It doesn't mean it's not true. I think that things like slavery are immoral. Not just illegal, but actually immoral. There's such a thing as natural law; there's such a thing as right and wrong; there's such a thing as justice. All these things are unprovable by science. They're all statements of faith. I think they're reasonable to believe, but you can't prove them by reason.

Because I'm a Christian I believe you should try to create a system where every human being can live with dignity. Aristotle thought that people who were born with birth defects should be exterminated; so did Hitler. Their philosophy is more of a belief in the law of nature, that the strong should survive and the others should be slaves.

TAE: Can libertarians and social conservatives coexist in the Republican party?

SCHUNDLER: I think that's the only place. It's natural. Libertarians and Christians belong with each other.

TAE: Although the market that libertarians esteem produces some sordid stuff religious conservatives object to.

SCHUNDLER: But the appropriate Christian response to someone who produces a disgusting product is to boycott it, to condemn it vocally. We should be less hesitant about censure—S-U-R-E. I don't think we should be into censoring—S-O-R. We should be ready to condemn someone and to shame him.

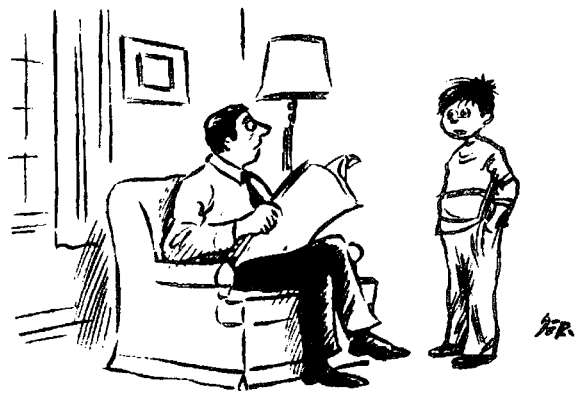
For instance, let's say we're importing goods from Mexico, where the hourly rate is only $2 an hour. If people freely choose a job where they're being paid $2 an hour because that's the best job available, it's ridiculous to say that it's wrong for them to take that job.

On the other hand, if you have a society where people are told, You have to work or be shot, I would say it would be immoral to buy that society's products, and the appropriate response would be a boycott led by the religious community. But the government shouldn't determine whom you can buy from and whom you can trade with, or you're giving the government too much power. Soon it'll interfere with, among other things, your religious freedom.

TAE: What's the relationship between government and churches when it comes to schooling?

SCHUNDLER: The idea that it's unconstitutional to allow public money to flow to religious schools is a red herring. The G.I. Bill allowed war veterans to spend their benefits at any college they wanted to attend—secular or religious. Same with Pell grants. When the government reimburses hospitals for Medicare expenses it doesn't stipulate that the money can't go to Jewish or Catholic or Mormon hospitals.

Also, the idea that government-funded schools are "value neutral" is ridiculous. All schools, even government schools, inculcate a value system. Today's public schools are government monopolies that teach their own values, which are secular and relativistic. Parents who want an alternative to the government-values monopoly should be able to send their kids to schools that reinforce the idea of right and wrong, without being discriminated against by having to pay again, in addition to their taxes.



"How does it feel being the lone holdout against a permissive society?"

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"Live" with TAE

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL, AND ENDEARING, INTELLECTUAL COUPLE IN LATE-TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA DESCRIBE THEIR THOROUGHLY INTERTWINED LIVES.

Milton & Rose Friedman

Sixty years of marriage, two children, four grandchildren, best-selling books (on economics, of all unlikely subjects for chart-toppers!), a landmark PBS *television series, a Nobel Prize: Milton and Rose Friedman have indeed been* Two Lucky People, *as they titled their newly published joint memoir. Milton Friedman has been the most influential economist of the latter half of the twentieth century. The principle upon which his work has been built is that people must be "free to choose," as the Friedman TV series (and co-authored book) was called. After a career spent mostly at the University of Chicago—where the couple met, on October 3, 1932, in Economics 301—Milton and Rose have chosen to spend the last two decades in the Bay Area, where Milton keeps an office at the Hoover Institution. Oakland journalist Michael Robinson interviewed the Friedmans for* TAE *at their apartment in downtown San Francisco.*

TAE: Was it fun writing a memoir?

ROSE: You re-lived both the good and the bad. "Fun" isn't the right word: It was interesting.

MILTON: It was a mixed bag. I had a series of operations on my back, and I was out of action for about a year; so there was a big hiatus.

ROSE: Then we went on a cruise for four weeks, and we took our Power Book with us, and it was a wonderful place to work.

MILTON: There's no better time, if you write a book and don't have to do any more research, to go on a long cruise. No telephone calls, no visitors, no conferences, no reporters coming around, and you have a restaurant to go to for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

TAE: In your collaborations, is there one person who's clearly the leader?

ROSE: I'm not competitive and never have been. I was smart enough to know that he was smarter so why should I try to compete with him?

MILTON: The first book that we really collaborated on was *Capitalism and Freedom*, which was published in 1962. It was based on a series of lectures, but the spoken word is very different from the written, and she took those lectures and turned them into the book. It never would have appeared if she hadn't rewritten those lectures. When it came out in 1962, it was not reviewed by any major American publication but it sold more than 500,000 copies. Compare that to the most influential book I have been a coauthor on, *A Monetary History of the United States*, which has not sold 20,000.

TAE: If you had to choose between doing the more popular books and *A Monetary History of the United States*, which would you choose?

MILTON: Had I not done the more serious work, I would not have been qualified to do the more fun work.

TAE: The credibility you established?

MILTON: That's all external. I'm talking internal. I wouldn't have understood the problems and I wouldn't have been able to write the same thing if I did not have the backing that came from the scientific work.

If you want to know what should be done about anything, if you want to make suggestions for policy or political change, you have to know how the world is working. Too much of political discussion is an expression of objectives without any real understanding of what means will yield you those objectives.

TAE: You talk about not being competitive Mrs. Friedman. Did you ever feel overshadowed?

ROSE: No. I've always felt that I'm responsible for at least half of what he's gotten. When people asked how I felt when he got the Nobel Prize, I said it seemed to me that I was part of it. Now, maybe that's false pride but I think it's true.

Every time he had to go somewhere to change his job, I gave up my job. I didn't feel that I was giving up anything. It seemed to me that that was the way it should be. He was the

The school system in the United States is our major socialist enterprise.

—Milton Friedman

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

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main income-bringer. It was his profession that was important. So I never felt neglected; I feel that I have much of the responsibility for his success. Am I wrong?

MILTON: Of course not. You know the fundamental principle of economics. Two people enter into a voluntary transaction, both have to benefit. What drives the world are the possibilities of voluntary exchanges in which everybody is better off. What destroys the world are actions which involve some people benefitting at the expense of others. The reason the Soviet Union ultimately fell was it was based on the principle that some people could tell other people what to do and could benefit at the expense of other people, whereas what makes a great success of a little spit of land like Hong Kong is that it's been based on the principle that all exchanges have to be voluntary.

TAE: It's been such a long association between you two: 60 years. Was it love at first sight?

ROSE: We landed in the same class in our first year of graduate school. [Jacob] Viner, the professor, arranged the students alphabetically. My name ended with D, Director, and his with an F, so we sat next to one another. I was the only girl in the class. So he had no choice.

TAE: Was this a relationship that blossomed over time?

ROSE: We were friends from the beginning. We worked together first, in statistics, in money, and the various other courses. Our first date, I think, was at the end of the first year when we went to the World's Fair together.

MILTON: That was 1933: Century of Progress. Made notable by the fan dancer whom we did not see.

ROSE: I don't remember anything about the fan dancer.

MILTON: If you think of the way in which people behave at a university, especially in graduate work when they're together, dating doesn't have any meaning. Most days Rose and I, George Stigler and his future wife, Allen Wallis and his future wife—the six of us—would have lunch together, we'd have dinner together.

ROSE: That's one of the virtues of coeducation instead of a female or male school. We lived together not in the way they live together today but in our different activities. My daughter went to a girl's school at first—Bryn Mawr. I listened to her stories about meeting somebody at Haverford, and you didn't just stop in to have a cup of coffee, you had a date. I don't think that's very healthy.

TAE: When did you first know that your economic views were contrary to the prevailing notions?

Women are in the market now, but they're losing out on the other half of their job with their children.

—Rose Friedman

MILTON: I went to Washington in 1935, and Rose went in '36. We went not really as economists but as statisticians. We went on a large-scale project to collect data on income and consumer purchases. So we weren't really involved in policy issues; it was much more a use of the technical training that we had as statisticians rather than as economists.

ROSE: And it was a job.

TAE: You were glad to have a job.

ROSE: The combination of being Jewish and, in my case, female, didn't help.

MILTON: There were no academic jobs, literally, for those combinations. Washington at that time was a very lively city. It was the early days of the New Deal. There was a large and energetic group of relatively young people. The city of Washington was not what it is now.

ROSE: And we were high on Roosevelt.

MILTON: We were very high on Roosevelt. Of course.

TAE: Was discrimination against women and Jews obvious in Washington in the '30s?

ROSE: I'm not sure we thought about it very much. Both of us were brought up in relatively small towns where we didn't experience the kind of anti-Semitism that our friends from New York felt. They'd always say, "You didn't get this job, you didn't get that job because of anti-Semitism," and we would say, well, maybe, but we're not so sure. But the proof of the pudding was that our close friends got teaching jobs right out of school and he didn't.

MILTON: We knew that academic jobs were likely to be hard to get for that reason, but that didn't apply in Washington. Washington was a pretty open, tolerant place.

TAE: Is faith something that's important in your lives?

ROSE: No.

MILTON: We have been agnostics.

TAE: Since?

MILTON: Childhood. I was fanatically religious until I was 11 or 12, and then suddenly one day I had an epiphany. I switched completely to the other side.

TAE: Culturally, were you ever involved in Jewish life?

ROSE: We've never joined a synagogue in Chicago.

MILTON: The only respect in which we have been involved is in connection with Israel.

ROSE: That's not really religious.

MILTON: It's cultural.

ROSE: Our families were both religious, so we were brought up following the Jewish laws.

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MILTON: I have no doubt that the cultural aspects of Judaism have affected both of us very much: the emphasis on intellectual activity, on education.

TAE: Was there a sense during your student days that your husband was going to be a rising star in economics?

ROSE: Not really. There were a lot of smart kids. He was no smarter than the others.

TAE: Have there ever been any philosophical rifts between the two of you?

ROSE: Not really.

MILTON: You must realize we're survivors. If we had had major differences in ideology, we probably would have broken up years ago, so you're looking at a biased sample.

TAE: A woman I interviewed once claimed there are two things you have to have to make marriage work: chemistry and shared values.

MILTON: What you really have to have is tolerance.That's more important than either of those.

ROSE: If you have opposite values, you don't get along very well.

MILTON: I don't remember our ever having a really serious argument.

ROSE: We could always persuade one another.

MILTON: That means I could always do what she asked.

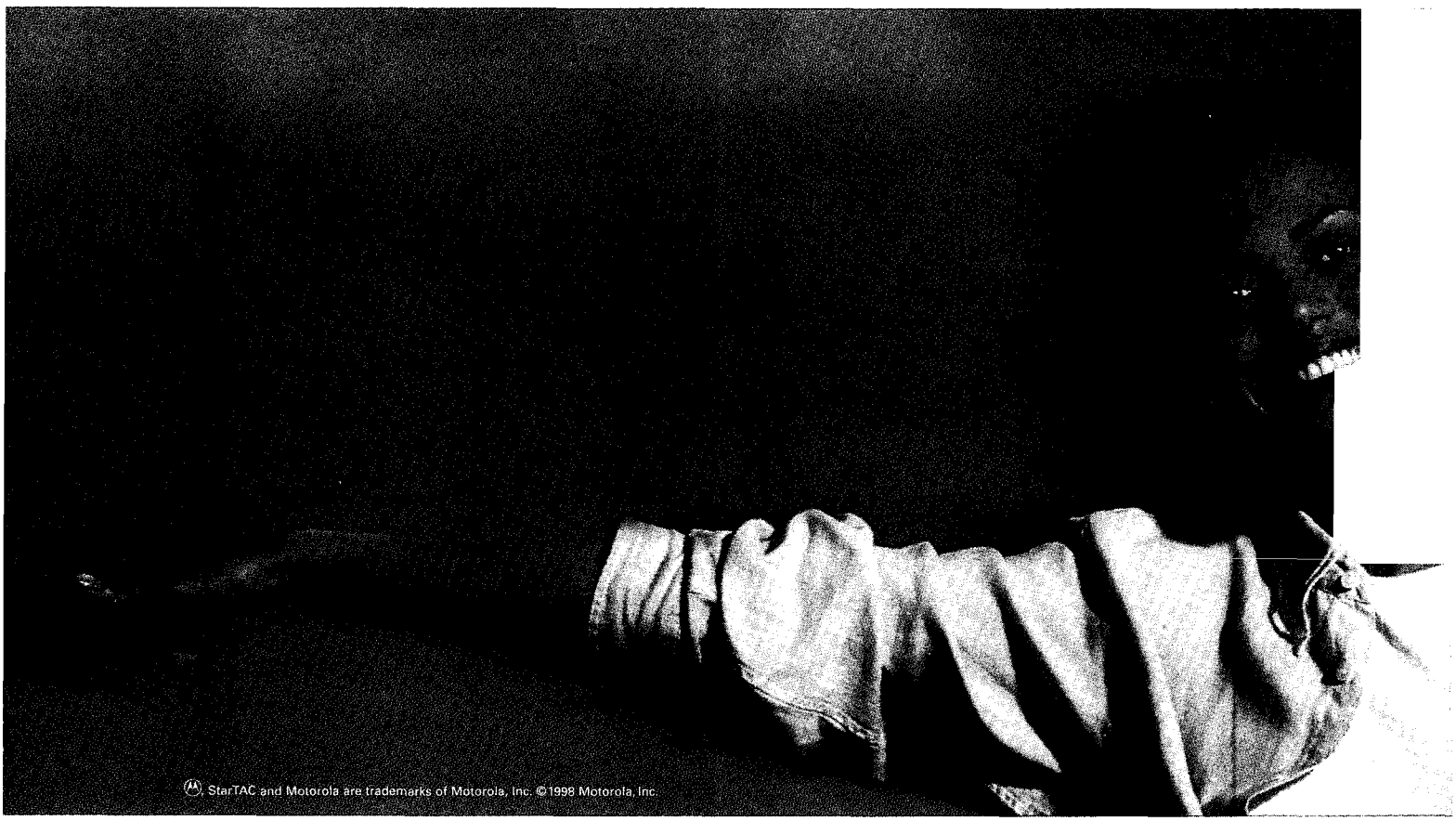
TAE: Tell me about your school voucher foundation.

ROSE: My first idea for a foundation, I have to confess, was not vouchers but to do something about the orphans in Bosnia. I mentioned it to several friends and each one said, "It's impossible, you can't do it." And I'm not really at the point where I can be very active in the foundation myself. It's too late. So then I thought vouchers is the next idea, so we set up the [Milton and Rose D. Friedman] Foundation. It's a question of getting the information to the public, because every time you think you've got the public, the unions come in.

MILTON: And the black leaders have never been for us because they get clout out of the public school system. They get patronage and influence.

ROSE: Since we started, the schools have gotten worse and worse. The only question is, what do you do about it? They established charter schools, which go halfway, but they're still public schools and they're still influenced by the union and all the rest. We would like to see a strict voucher system. We would like to see parents being responsible for the education of their children and not the government.

MILTON: It's hard to overestimate the importance of this issue. Our main interest all our life has been the promotion of human freedom. The school system in the United States is our major socialist enterprise other than the military. Ninety percent of kids, roughly, are in government schools. So this is a major socialist enterprise, and it will teach socialism. Every institution



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will reflect its own internal characteristics. In addition, public schools are governmental monopolies under the control of the teachers' unions and the professional education establishment.

ROSE: If you want a good job, go to the teachers' union.

MILTON: They are undoubtedly the strongest political lobby in the country. In the 1992 Democratic convention, something between a fifth and a quarter of all delegates were from the teachers' unions. Same thing in 1996.

ROSE: Clinton, as governor of Arkansas, was for vouchers, until he became President. And now he's in bed with the teachers' unions—as well as everybody else.

MILTON: That's a nasty crack!

Monopoly is bad, and government monopoly is doubly bad. If you were to have parents having really free choice, you would have a brand new industry. It would explode: Competition would force the public schools to improve their performance, and that would offer parents at every income level, but particularly in the low-income level, alternative opportunities for improving the well-being of their children.

One of the most serious dangers that this country faces is balkanization into a society of haves and have-nots. What mechanisms are readily available to reduce that balkanization? The only one that I know of that has any real promise is improvement of the quality of the education available to the low-income family.

If you have a voucher system open to everybody, neither you nor I are smart enough to figure out what the educational industry would look like ten years from now, any more than when the personal computer came on the scene, who imagined the Internet? The equivalent of the Internet will develop if you open this up to competition and innovation. Homeschooling is rising very rapidly because the computer has made it much easier to homeschool your children.

ROSE: The Internet is really going to be the final answer to women, I think.

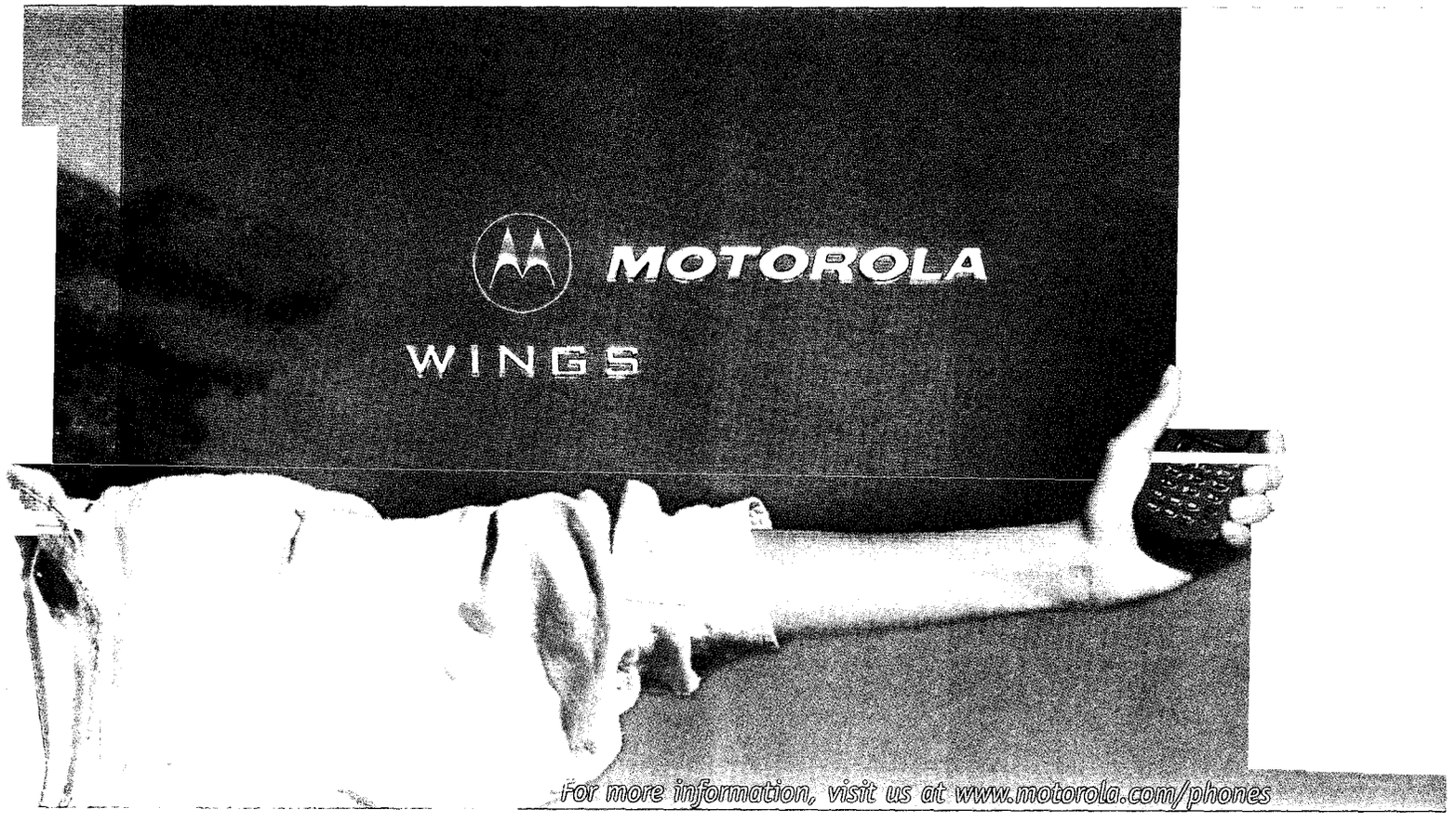
TAE: How so?

ROSE: The situation for women in the job market when I came out was certainly not good. I don't think the situation today is any better in a different sense. Women are in the market now, but they're losing out on the other half of their job with their children. With the computer, they don't have to leave the house at 8:00 or nurse their babies in a special room that the factory sets up for them; they can nurse their babies at home but work at the same time. It's going to be a much better solution for women's problems.

TAE: If you had to pin on a label, would it be "libertarian"?

ROSE: It comes closest.

MILTON: Classical liberal is our favorite designation, but libertarian is roughly the same. I am a libertarian with a small *L* and a Republican with a capital *R*.



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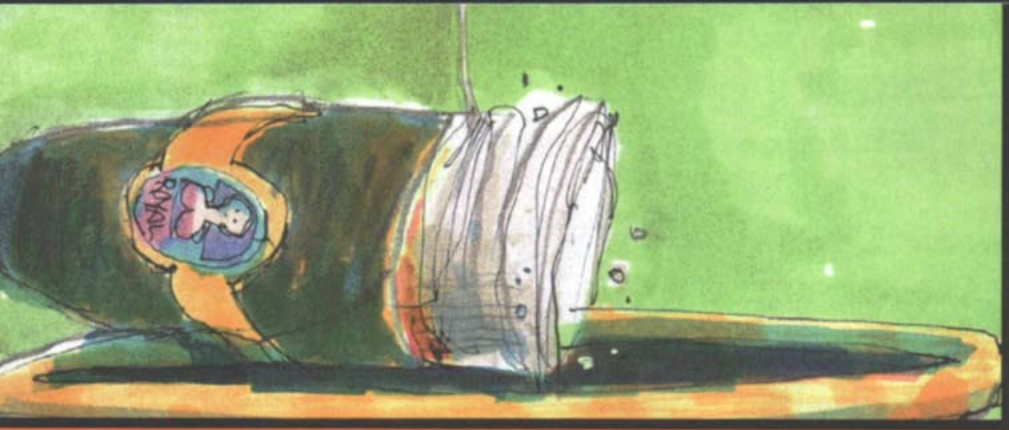
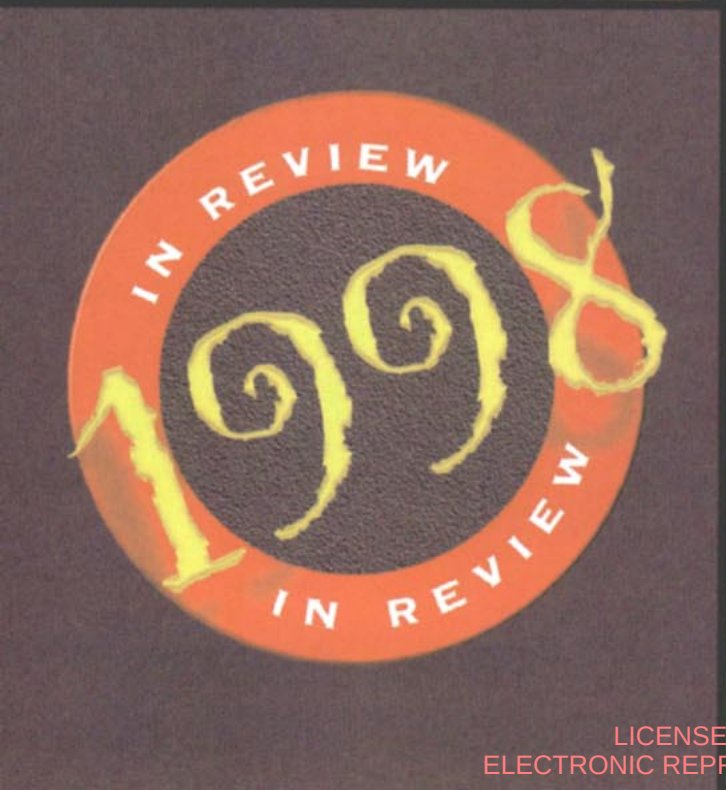
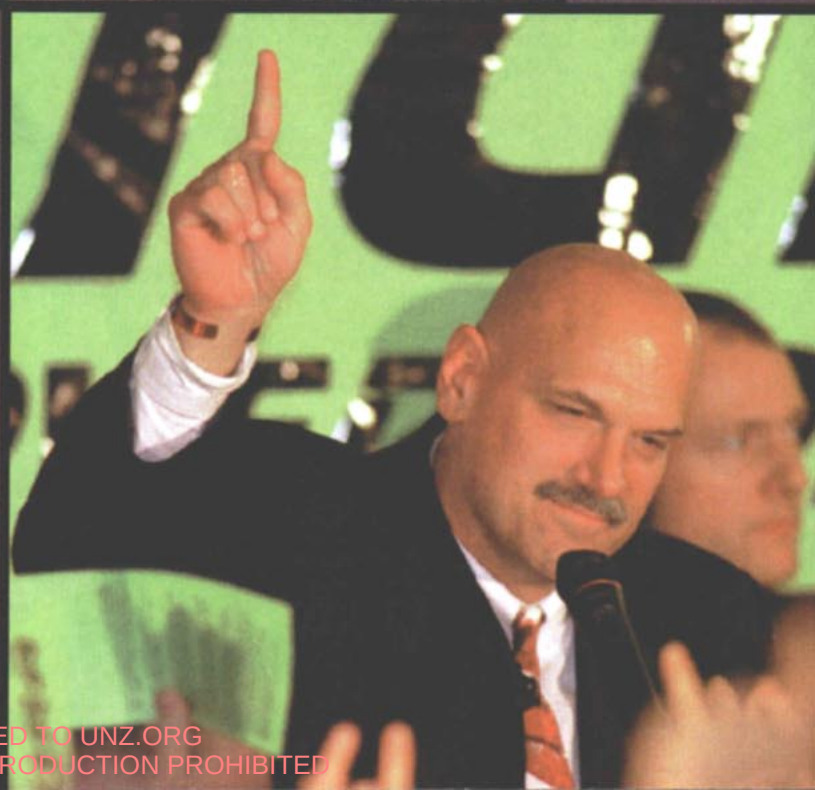


Photos (clockwise from top right): Linda Tripp; Movie poster from *Saving Private Ryan;* Minnesota governor-elect Jesse Ventura; President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky at the White House, December 16, 1996.





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THE YEAR OF THE Goat

To make sense of the tumultuous year 1998, The American Enterprise *assembled three seasoned observers of folly:* Lucianne Goldberg, *literary agent best known for her friendship with Linda Tripp;* Mark Steyn, *columnist for* The American Spectator *and the London* Spectator; *and* Andrew Ferguson, *senior editor at the* Weekly Standard *and a former Bush administration speechwriter. The three took off like conversational greyhounds on subjects ranging from "that woman, Ms. Lewinsky" to World War II.* TAE *senior editor Scott Walter served as ringmaster amidst the sawdust of the Harvard Club in New York City.*

TAE: Who was the year's worst actor?
STEYN: Bill Clinton. He has the indestructibility of the true ham. But I don't mind Bill Clinton venturing into acting; I mind when actors venture into other things. I can't believe Michael Douglas, who played President Andrew Shepherd in *The American President*—on which Bill Clinton modeled his bombing strategies—is now going around in charge of a disarmament campaign. He thinks nuclear proliferation is dangerous, and he thinks the fact that he's a celebrity will end it. But I don't know whether they liked *Fatal Attraction* in North Korea.
TAE: Best or worst book of the year?
FERGUSON: The best book, obviously, was the Starr report. The book is filled with so many beautiful and illuminating details.
GOLDBERG: Like how angry Monica was that she gave him *Vox* and he didn't read it. He said, "I'm only up to chapter three," and she was furious because there are no chapters in the book.
STEYN: That's Clinton, isn't it? Such an unnecessary lie.
FERGUSON: Their sexual encounters are what you'd expect from a 15-year-old couple going out behind the garage when Mom and Dad aren't looking, not really sure what they can get away with.
STEYN: When reading the Starr report, just put your hand over who's speaking and try to guess whether it's Bill or Monica. Often Bill sounds like the 21-year-old.
GOLDBERG: Mind you, he did all of this with the door open—
FERGUSON: —hoping to get caught, just the way a 15-year-old would. And he pouts to her on the phone, "If I'd known what kind of person you were, I never would have gotten involved with you."

Clockwise, top right: AP Photo, Dreamworks/Shooting Star; AP Photo/Jim Moore; AP Photo/OIC)

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AT THE BUSH WHITE HOUSE, LINDA TRIPP TOLD ME, "I'M NOT EVEN SURE I'M GOING TO VOTE FOR BUSH."

—ANDREW FERGUSON

TAE: Is there anything you would have told Starr if you were his editor?

GOLDBERG: No. The minutiae of it was, to me, like doing needlepoint. I couldn't get enough. It's like eating chocolate-covered popcorn.

STEYN: The problem wasn't the Starr report. It was a huge best-seller in Britain, and the British press loved it. If you had that kind of press in this country, I think Clinton would have been gone in a week. There is a gentility in the American media, which could barely mention cigars, while papers in London would have been having free cigar giveaways. Unfortunately, it was the wrong report for the country.

FERGUSON: Although Starr got slammed for his salacious detail, there is clearly a lot left out that I, for one, am dying to know.

STEYN: One day there will be, "The Starr Report: The Director's Cut," and we'll get to see the whole damn thing.

GOLDBERG: If they would let Linda [Tripp]'s tapes go, we could hear a lot of that now.

TAE: What about the reports the Tripp tapes were copied and possibly doctored?

GOLDBERG: They weren't tampered with. A few of the tapes were taped over; they had something else on them. I think Linda is such a techno-spaz that she just grabbed tapes out of this big bowl she kept them in, and she probably taped over some of the early Monica phone calls.

TAE: Mr. Steyn said Clinton would have been driven from office quickly if he'd been in Europe. Yet we hear it said Europeans are laughing at us for even caring about his affairs.

STEYN: In most British Commonwealth countries he'd be gone, because being a laughingstock, a buffoon, is enough. Just last week in Britain, the Secretary of State for Wales picked up a guy in London, who took him to a park where he was supposed to meet a man for sex—that happened on Monday. The Secretary was gone by Wednesday.

GOLDBERG: When you say "gone," do they go out of their own sense of decency? Because we don't have that in the States.

STEYN: That's true. In this country you have a strange monarchical reverence for the institution that the British don't have. They have that healthy vulgarian glee in seeing a grandee slip on a banana skin.

GOLDBERG: I'm convinced that the root of Clinton's quest for power was to get better chicks. I remember back in the early days of NOW [the National Organization for Women], guys were joining, and I would say, "What are you, nuts?" But the guys figured NOW was made up of loose girls so let's join NOW.

FERGUSON: People like me, stuffed shirts, will say, "How could a man have spent his entire life seeking an office and then risk it by having a dalliance with some young girl to whom he was supposed to be acting *in loco parentis*?" Apparently he wanted the office specifically so he could *have* rights over a girl who would drop to her knees without having to be talked to for the first four dates.

TAE: Lowest media moment of the year?

GOLDBERG: All of "Geraldo." Wall to wall.

TAE: Have you been on "Geraldo"?

GOLDBERG: I won't do "Geraldo." I get mash notes from Geraldo because he's like Clinton: He zeroes in on that one person who doesn't like him who he wants to have like him.

FERGUSON: I thought the media's lowest moment was the retirement of Michael McCurry, the President's spokesman and extremely genial liar, who was paid to stand up in front of the press corps and keep information from coming out. You have 40 journalists who work in the White House, are fed like animals in a zoo, and who grew to love their zoo keeper. It was a classic case of the Stockholm syndrome. They grew to love their captor so much that they brought him out a cake on the day he left and cheered and said "Mike is the best there is."

GOLDBERG: And then he goes to work for CNN, the Clinton News Network.

TAE: Who would be MVP of the Vast Right Wing Conspiracy?

STEYN: I wish there was a Vast Right Wing Conspiracy, but it seems to be a one-woman show, Lucianne.

GOLDBERG: Well, no. There's also FreeRepublic.com, who for a long time were almost the only ones who supported Linda Tripp after she came forward. Here was a woman whose physical appearance was being brutalized by people so politically correct that if you said something nasty about mosquitoes, they'd be on you for violating insect rights. Yet they had no qualms about calling her fat, ugly, gross, duplicitous, the most hated woman in America. Please. She's not an ax murderer.

FERGUSON: She's not even particularly conservative.

GOLDBERG: She's an independent. She's a bureaucrat. And she happens to be a very attractive woman. There's nothing wrong with her appearance. I mean, Mandy Grunwald? If you're going to go that route, I'll see your Linda Tripp and raise you one Mandy Grunwald.

FERGUSON: I remember Linda's politics because I worked with her at the Bush White House. One late night she said, "You know, I'm not even sure I'm going to vote for Bush." She's a textbook example of a whistleblower who becomes vilified by the people who created the term "whistleblower."

GOLDBERG: I'll tell you, she's not a whiner. At one point I said, "Linda, would you do it again?" And she said, "In a heartbeat." She has never wavered, never whined, unlike the other side. She does not see herself as a victim. She sees this as temporary hell.

STEYN: I think the better you know Clinton the more you loathe him. That would seem to be a fairly general rule. And that's the difficulty. Because the American electorate don't often get to see him in the raw.

FERGUSON: You have to watch Clinton day in and day out to understand the depth of his loathsomeness. This is why the Belt-

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WHAT'S FUNNY IS THE WAY SPIELBERG HAS BEEN ACCORDED THE STATUS OF A WAR HERO JUST BY MAKING A MOVIE ABOUT THE WAR.

—MARK STEYN

way media turned against Clinton. If it's your business to wake up every day and monitor what is coming out of the White House, you become appalled. But for most people, politics is not terribly interesting. They don't really care what their President is doing as long as he's not screwing them. You just tune in every once in a while. "Oh, there's the President with his new initiative about banning deadbeat dads from being allowed to have guns. That sounds like a good idea." And then you turn off again and go about raising your children and doing your work.

STEYN: There's a nonpolitical majority in the country now. If you're in Washington you're watching C-SPAN and MSNBC, but everyone else is watching the Weather Channel or the Old Movies Channel or the Wainscoting Channel.

TAE: Does America deserve Clinton?

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. They re-elected him, they deserve him, let them eat cake.

STEYN: Before you start blaming either the public or the Clintonistas, remember there is a third player here, the Republican leadership. Not one of them in the impeachment debates has said anything coherent, moving, rising to the standard of the occasion—

GOLDBERG: —like Senator Lieberman from the Democratic side.

STEYN: That's the real problem.

FERGUSON: I think we're trying to explain the Clinton gang in normal categories, and usually when people are successful, we ascribe it to intelligence or cunning, but I think the source of the Clintonistas' power is shamelessness to a degree never seen in public life before. They will say anything to accomplish their ends, and that's a tremendous power. It's almost as though the chattering classes and the Republican leadership are so astonished that they're utterly disarmed by it.

TAE: Does the election of Jesse "The Body" Ventura mean anything for our two-party system?

FERGUSON: I worry that the Republicans in their infinite wisdom are going to draw precisely the wrong conclusions from this. Reasoning that Jesse Ventura used to wear a feather boa in his previous career they'll nominate Carol Channing for President in 2000, or something. The fact is, Ventura ran on a not-ludicrous platform. He talked about taxes, and Minnesota is a very heavily taxed state. I would have voted for him over Hubert Humphrey III. I would have voted for him over Hubert Humphrey the first.

TAE: It's being argued in the press today that the Republican party has become too Southern, too religious, too conservative, and that's why it isn't doing well.

STEYN: Well compared to what? They were pathetic in the election, but they weren't wiped out. I don't think you can say they're too Southern or too conservative. They're just nothing. They're this big wobbling heap of Jell-O in the middle of the table.

GOLDBERG: And they can't even turn out their core constituency. I mean, they weren't busing hymn-singing Southerners to the polls. Where are these people when we need them?

FERGUSON: Well, maybe they don't exist. This idea that a large chunk of insurgents have taken over the Republican party is absurd. It's a left-wing fantasy, a nightmare they wish would come true.

TAE: Some on the right have argued that conservatives are too anti-government, and that instead we ought to focus on positive ways we could use the government: "Big Government Conservatism" or "National Greatness Conservatism."

STEYN: We've got enough of that. I'm very sorry this guy got beaten up and tied to a fence in Wyoming, but for Orrin Hatch to then say we need federal hate crimes legislation is completely ridiculous. What is the point of electing Republican senators to say things like that? What is the point of electing Republican senators who say, "We have no argument with President Clinton about the $1.1 billion for 100,000 new teachers—it's just that we want it to be spent slightly differently."

The winning formula for Republicans ought to be that more power should be devolved to the states, and beyond that more power should be devolved to county and town and school districts, because when it's your neighbor who's sticking you with high taxes, you get mad about it, and that acts as a natural constraint on the neighbor.

When it's miles away in Washington it sounds all fluffy and cuddly and cozy, and the Republicans are absolutely hopeless at finding a national strategy to combat that touchy-feely stuff from the Clinton side. The national government even now is Democratic, with the Republicans being dragged along. But state government in America is essentially Republican, with a few canny Democrats being dragged in the Republican direction. Maybe it's time for the Republicans to get out of federal elections altogether and just stay home.

To the media, practically every form of Republican is an obvious fruitcake. If Representative Susan Molinari had been elected leader of the House, her Mary Tyler Moore image would have been demolished quickly, and she'd be presented as an "extreme" right-wing crazy.

GOLDBERG: Isn't Big Government Conservatism an oxymoron?

FERGUSON: No, there is such a thing as Big Government Conservatism: It's called Clintonism. It's about big government that deploys its considerable powers in very small, specified ways to drum up a billion dollars for 100,000 teachers, to require safety locks on guns. There is no other kind of conservatism in Washington anymore.

STEYN: The Clinton issues are things that are not within the federal government's jurisdiction. He wanted to allocate $4 billion to school roofs. Why roofs?

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MONICA WILL BE FINE.

THERE'S A CERTAIN KIND OF MAN WHO WOULD LOVE TO WALK INTO A RESTAURANT WITH MONICA.

—LUCIANNE GOLDBERG

FERGUSON: The wainscoting in America's schools is a national disgrace! And lattices. We need more lattices in our schools.
STEYN: Clinton has done something remarkable. Instead of growing to fit the office, he's shrunk the office to fit him. He says he wishes he'd been President during World War II so he could have risen to the occasion.
GOLDBERG: We'd all be speaking German.
STEYN: Madeleine Albright would be saying, "We've reached this bilateral agreement with Adolf Hitler, and he'll be stationing troops in Bermuda."
TAE: The President's Commission on Race promised us a full and frank dialogue on the subject but delivered tired clichés. Will truths about race ever be sayable in this country?
STEYN: What I find so ridiculous is that [African-American novelist] Toni Morrison says Clinton is our first black President—because he's from a single-parent household, likes junk food, and plays the saxophone. She left out eats watermelon. He's about as black as Pat Boone. It's the world's greatest minstrel act.
TAE: Why is the entertainment industry ramming lesbians down our throats today?
STEYN: I think I speak for most men when I say I wouldn't mind lesbians being rammed down our throats. But it's true, lesbians were last year's thing.
FERGUSON: Lesbians are hot because men like them. This is Howard Stern's great cultural insight: Lesbians equal ratings. Do you think that a male version of "Ellen" in which she had her celebrated kiss with another woman, could have been done? Do you think all of America would have tuned in to watch two guys kiss each other? Who do you think tuned in to watch Ellen get her kiss? Men.
GOLDBERG: Men like the idea; it's we heterosexual women who are offended.
STEYN: The strategy in Hollywood is to desexualize gays. Lesbians come a little further ahead on the list because there's no icky penetration involved. But gay men are also fashionable in Hollywood at the moment: all these ludicrous films about straight women and gay men. They're desexualized gay men: Hollywood is not yet ready to champion anything approaching an honest version of homosexuality. If you looked at all the TV movies about AIDS over the last 15 years, you would have thought that gay male sex was absolutely the last way you could have caught it.
FERGUSON: I would think that gay activists would find the exfoliation of gay characters on sit-coms offensive, because they are now the equivalent of Rochester on the Jack Benny show. TV's gay man is socially insecure, witty, has a mysterious private life. They are all alike.
GOLDBERG: But that's the way heterosexual women experience gays. We don't know about their sex life. They don't talk about it. They're great fun to be with. They're witty. There are all those stereotypes.
STEYN: Even in Ogunquit, Maine, a very gay-friendly town where many fastidious gay couples spend happy weekends antiquing, the gay rights referenda lose. America is happy to have the sort of gal's-best-friend gay, but they're not ready to go beyond that.
TAE: Does anyone have a criticism of *Saving Private Ryan*?
STEYN: There's one moment where Tom Hanks actually says, "Oh, well, maybe saving Private Ryan is the one good thing to come out of this lousy war."
TAE: There are 12 more movies in production on World War II in Hollywood. One Vietnam veteran I know is struggling to have a good Vietnam movie made and wonders, "Why do these baby-boomer draft dodgers love to make World War II hero movies?"
GOLDBERG: It's just a natural tendency to secretly realize where the heroes are and go looking for them, hoping some of it will splatter on you. Remember Clinton walking across the White House lawn, flanked by uniformed officers and flags? Or in Omaha Beach, where he made the cross out of seashells that they had conveniently put there? It's all a scam, but the administration knows what real people consider worthwhile, and they want to get a little slice of it.
FERGUSON: I'm not cynical about this. All of my friends' parents were in the service in World War II, and my father was, and they were heroes. Maybe this is just a very delayed but sweet and innocent rediscovery that gosh, they really were an amazing generation.
GOLDBERG: There are still people living among us who put country above everything.
STEYN: I think there's also some baby-boomer enviousness of the veterans, who went through something big that younger people haven't.

What's funny is the way Spielberg has almost been accorded the status of a war hero himself just by making a movie about the war. We can't distinguish between the actual and the simulation anymore. Some Democrat introducing Bill Clinton in the Midwest had the nerve to say, "This man has been battle tested." Bill Clinton is famously *un*-battle tested.
FERGUSON: I remember an amazing moment at the 1996 White House Correspondents' dinner. Al Franken, who is in Clinton's pocket, was giving his little schtick, and the President was right next to him. Everyone knew Bob Dole was going to be running against the President that fall, and Franken told a joke about being interviewed by a Danish reporter who said, "Senator Dole is so old. How can you vote for a man who's so old?" And Franken said, "Well, look, he was young enough to save your sorry ass."

This room full of baby boomers, none of whom, I can guarantee you, went on to vote for Bob Dole, stood up, en masse; the President was beaming at this—our first President who went halfway around the world to avoid being in the military.

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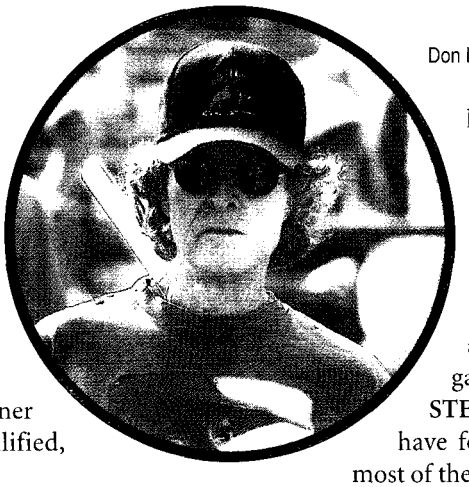

Gamma Liaison © Steve Berman

Don Imus

That's getting it on the cheap: If we stand up and cheer Bob Dole because he really was a man and left a quarter of his body back at Anzio, we think that somehow reflects well on us baby boomers.

STEYN: When Spielberg was asked what good came out of World War II he said, Well, it produced the baby boomer generation, and I think we've done a lot of good.

GOLDBERG: Andy, that was the same dinner where [talk show host] Don Imus got vilified, right?

TAE: The press was outraged, not because he said a few tame things about Bubba, but because he joked about Sam Donaldson's toupee and Peter Jennings' needing a V-chip in his pants.

FERGUSON: He had a great line about Ed Bradley's little earring: "Ed, you're a newsman, not a pirate."

GOLDBERG: Imus's finest moment.

TAE: This year's tobacco legislation was shot down by the Republicans. Does this mean neo-puritanism is on the ropes?

STEYN: It's the most pointless kind of gesture politics. In Burlington, Vermont, the city passed an ordinance saying cigarettes have to be sealed in a case, and you're not allowed to have any kind of labeling or advertisements on display. You have to go in and ask for them the way 20 years ago you would have to go to the back of the store and ask for the transsexual dating magazine.

Statistically, the big health problem in this country is not tobacco but food. If you want to wage war on anything, you should be waging war on Burger King and Dunkin' Donuts.

FERGUSON: Don't give them any ideas. One salutary thing about the demonization of tobacco is that maybe when my kid gets into high school and he wants to be really naughty, instead of shooting up heroin he may just go buy a pack of Camels.

TAE: Do too many people go to grad school?

FERGUSON: Yes, like me.

STEYN: I'm in favor of a federal school-leaving age of 12. One of the problems is that if we keep people in school until they're 35, we can postpone endlessly what they're supposed to learn in grade school, and that's effectively what's happening in the United States. America already spends more money per pupil than any other civilized country. We pay teachers more than they're paid anywhere, we've reduced class sizes more than they're reduced in any other country. We go on paying more and more teachers to teach fewer and fewer children at greater and greater costs and get dumber and dumber kids.

TAE: One of my favorite Lucianne Goldberg quotations is that women should "look, cook, and smell good to men." Has one good thing from Monica-gate been that feminism will die, that sexual harassment laws will fizzle?

GOLDBERG: I believe that quotation comes from a book I wrote in 1971.

TAE: Yes, when you formed the Pussycat League.

GOLDBERG: Right, and we pussycats have finally won. Feminism has had its day. Maybe it's because I was raised in the South, but I always thought women already had the upper hand and that equality was a step down. We controlled the bedroom, the kitchen, the checkbook. Why do I want to be equal to a guy who's got to get up every morning and schlep off to a dehumanizing job? More and more of my friends in their forties are dying to go back home and raise their kids, but they've got a mortgage to pay.

STEYN: Out in rural America women seem to have found a way of balancing it. They spend most of the day with the children, but they have two or three hours in which they run some little business from home.

GOLDBERG: Those few years you have with the kids don't last. Life is very long. And those few years that you get to do the most creative thing there is in life, which is to raise straight-ahead kids, goes in a minute. Then you can go run a bank or invent something or be a movie star.

TAE: Why the comeback today of martinis, cigars, swing music?

STEYN: That's a yearning for a lost style.

TAE: Baseball also made a comeback in 1998.

FERGUSON: Mark McGwire, who is obviously a manly person, is also a product of today's therapeutic culture. He was boasting of the years he spent in therapy, and he has a vocabulary centered on the words *beautiful* and *incredible*. I'm sure that Lou Gehrig and DiMaggio and certainly Roger Maris were not the most articulate people in the world, but it is inconceivable that Roger Maris ever would have talked about his therapist.

TAE: What's Clinton going to do in retirement?

GOLDBERG: We all know he's going to Hollywood, right? My scenario is, he somehow thinks the Hillcrest Country Club is the place to be. He gets into one of those poker games with the likes of Shecky Greene and Carl Reiner and they take every penny he's ever going to have in his life. Hillary is on the lounge circuit with Gennifer Flowers, working Vegas. That's the only way they could ever pay back the poker debt. And he ends up as just this sorry piece of celery at the end of the bar.

FERGUSON: He'll be sleeping with Shecky's wife, though.

GOLDBERG: And Shecky will be grateful because he can keep playing.

FERGUSON: It's still possible that he and Monica could get back together.

GOLDBERG: Monica will be fine. There's a certain kind of man who would love to walk into a restaurant with Monica.

FERGUSON: I know several million of them.

GOLDBERG: She'll marry some dentist who has more gold chains than he can swim with and she'll be perfectly happy.

STEYN: The idea of Bill with no job, at home with Hillary every day for 40 years....

FERGUSON: Practicing the damn saxophone....

GOLDBERG: It's a circle of Hell.

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THE FAILURES AND FUTURE PROMISE BEHIND

the Republican Stumble

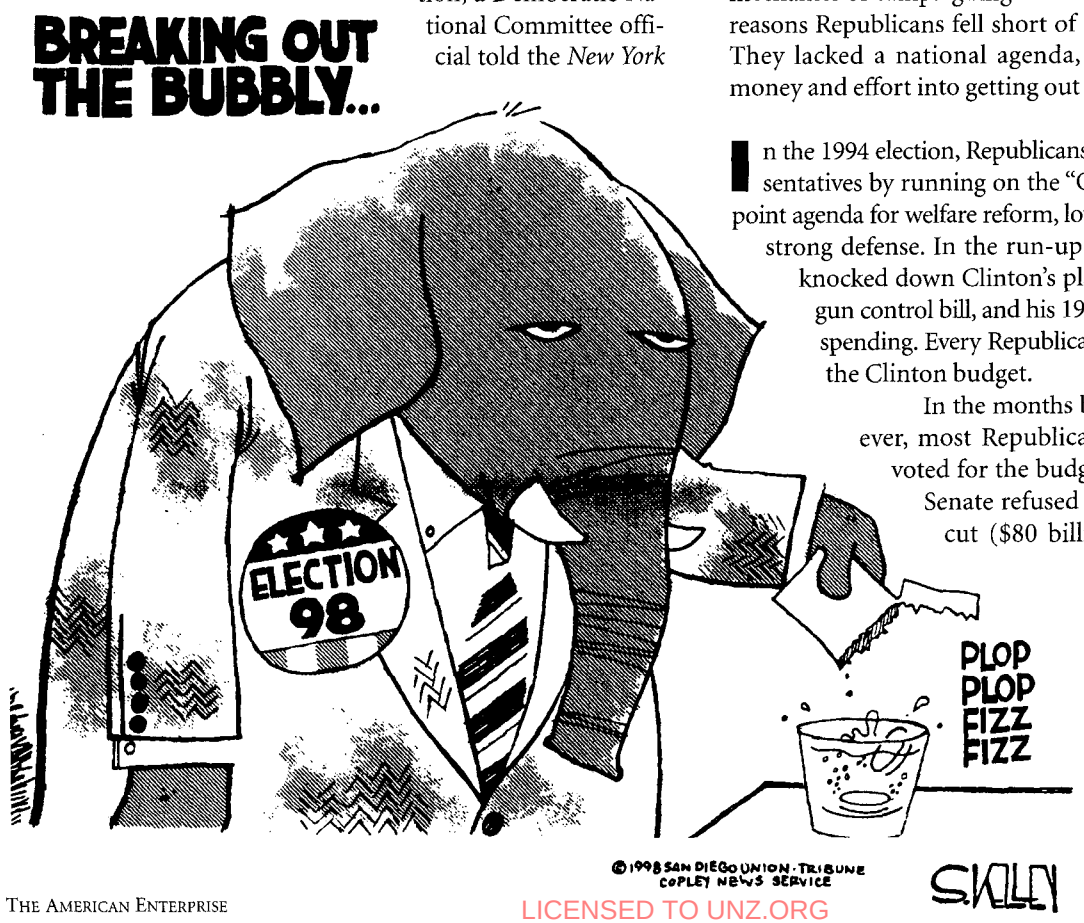
By Grover Norquist

At first glance, little changed on November 3. Republicans began and ended with 55 U.S. senators. Their 228 House seats edged down to 223. Out in the states, there were 32 GOP governors before the election, 17 Democrats, and one independent. Twenty-four hours later the totals were 31 Republicans, 17 Democrats, and two independents. Of the 7,376 state senators and representatives, Republicans lost a total of 12. Overall, Republicans continued their majority holds on the U.S. Senate, the House, and the bulk of the states' governorships.

Yet few Republicans were rejoicing—because they, like most observers, had expected the GOP to continue its long march through Congress and the state houses. Just weeks before the election, a Democratic National Committee official told the *New York Times* that losing fewer than 26 House seats and six Senate seats would be "a huge victory."

Democrats tried to "spin" that the election was a backlash against Republican talk of impeachment. Actually, the national exit polls found only 5 percent of voters singled out the Lewinsky scandal as the most important issue, and this group mostly voted Republican. Nineteen percent of the voters said the most important issue was "moral and ethical standards," and more than four out of five in this cohort went Republican.

Some Republicans tried to blame the GOP 's poor showing on the party's failure to run a strong "technical" campaign. In reality, the party and its candidates did a decent job with the mechanics of campaigning. This only highlights the two deeper reasons Republicans fell short of their optimistic expectations: They lacked a national agenda, and the Democrats poured money and effort into getting out their constituencies.



In the 1994 election, Republicans captured the House of Representatives by running on the "Contract with America," a ten-point agenda for welfare reform, lower taxes, less regulation, and a strong defense. In the run-up to that election, Republicans knocked down Clinton's plan to socialize health care, his gun control bill, and his 1993 budget that raised taxes and spending. Every Republican in the House voted against the Clinton budget.

In the months before the 1998 election, however, most Republicans in the House and Senate voted for the budget deal with Clinton, and the Senate refused even to vote on the small tax cut ($80 billion over five years) that the House had passed, which made it hard for Republicans to argue that voting for them would mean lower taxes. (Back in 1994, the Senate did not participate in the Contract with America, but senators at least avoided undermining it.)

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Admittedly, even if Republicans had presented a unified front, they would have had trouble competing for attention with Clinton's admission of a relationship with Monica Lewinsky, as well as with such conveniently timed media events as the Middle East peace discussions and John Glenn's space trip. On the other hand, the fate of key campaigns and ballot initiatives suggests a more principled campaign might have worked.

Take taxes. In Montana, voters passed a constitutional amendment requiring that all tax hikes be voted on by the people. In Arkansas, the political establishment tried to repeal the existing constitutional requirement for a three-fourths vote in the state legislature to raise taxes, but 60 percent of voters said *no*. In "Taxachusetts," voters overwhelmingly chose to halve the income tax on "unearned" income.

More than 1,100 candidates for state legislatures promised to oppose tax increases and signed the Taxpayer Protection Pledge championed by my organization, Americans for Tax Reform. They joined 210 members of the House and 42 senators. Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci consistently challenged his Democratic opponent to explain why he would not sign the no-tax-hike pledge. Alabama's Republican Governor Fob James defeated his well-funded primary opponent by highlighting several taxes the opponent had supported in the past. James himself was defeated by the only Democratic candidate for governor who signed the pledge. In Kansas, the moderate Republican Bill Graves crushed a conservative challenge from the Republican party chairman by pointing out that his challenger had once supported a tax hike. Graves bragged he had cut taxes in every year of his governorship and defeated his Democratic opponent 73-23 percent. Texas easily re-elected Governor George W. Bush, who campaigned on his $1 billion property tax cut and promised to cut taxes another $2.7 billion.

National exit polls show Republicans won 65 percent of those voters who said taxes were their top concern, but that group made up only 11 percent of the electorate. If Republicans had made taxes the priority of 15 percent of voters, the GOP would likely have scored gains in the House rather than losses.

On other issues too, voters endorsed key conservative principles. Washington State voters, even as they re-elected liberal Patty Murray to the Senate and swept Democrats to power in both houses of the state legislature, voted 59-41 percent to abolish racial and gender preferences. Idaho voters reiterated support for term limits, while Alaska voted to use English in its official actions. Gay marriages were handily voted down in Hawaii and Alaska, and Georgia rejected a tax increase that would have paid for environmental land purchases. Virginia voted down the creation of super-regional governments with the power to tax and regulate growth.

Still, Republican timidity wasn't the only reason Democrats held back the Republican tide. Credit is also due to Democrats' unprecedented get-out-the-vote effort, funded with money from trial lawyers and union dues, and targeted at union members and African Americans.

CONTEMPORARY LIBERALISM WOULD NOT SURVIVE LOSING CONTROL OF BOTH THE PRESIDENCY AND THE CONGRESS FOR EVEN A TWO-YEAR PERIOD.

This effort considerably boosted the number of union members and blacks voting in a number of tight elections. In a 45 percent black Georgia congressional district, Democratic votes jumped from roughly 72,000 in 1994 to over 100,000 in 1998—an increase that accounted for a fifth of the Republican gubernatorial candidate's margin of defeat. All told, unions, trial lawyers, and large Democratic donors spent tens of millions of dollars on unreported, untraceable efforts to mobilize voters.

They did this because they know the stakes: their political lives. A specter haunts Democrats: If Republicans win the presidency along with the House and Senate (and redistricting will likely give Republicans an additional 15 or more House seats in 2002), then the GOP could pass tort reform—taking a $5-10 billion a year bite out of trial lawyer fees. The Republicans could also prevent unions from using members' dues for politics without the worker's permission, costing labor activists at least $2 billion a year. And changing the way federal funds flow to our big cities to ensure monies go directly to students, tenants, and the poor—rather than flowing through the Democratic party's precinct workers—would cut off hundreds of millions of dollars now flowing to the Democrats.

So far, Bill Clinton has made institutional reforms like these impossible. If that blockage were lifted, long-delayed measures could pass that would result in a liberation of American politics from a half-century-long liberal stranglehold. So no one should be surprised by the racist ads run by Missouri's Democratic party suggesting Republicans want to burn down black churches, or by the Democrats' phony "pollsters" who called retirees to plant the idea that voting Republican would mean that Social Security checks wouldn't arrive next month. For the fact is, contemporary liberalism would not survive losing control of both the presidency and the Congress for even a two-year period.

The good news for Republicans is that their core issues remain popular. They will succeed if led by a presidential candidate able to motivate common sense middle-class Americans to show up at the polls and outnumber the voters ginned up by desperate Democrats. The natural place for Republicans to build some enthusiasm for their agenda is at the state level. In Washington, Bill Clinton will veto GOP reforms on issues like taxes and school choice. But similar efforts to give citizens greater control over their own lives, improve education, reduce taxes, eliminate racial preferences, and reduce spending can be enacted by Republicans in state governments. Today there are 14 states—including Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—where Republicans control the governorship and both houses of the legislature.

With real achievements from our regional capitals, and a presidential candidate drawn from the ranks of America's 31 Republican state executives, the GOP can offer voters in 2000 a choice between proven success and throwback tactics.

Grover Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

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Democrats Hit a Jackpot

By Peter Augustine Lawler

The soul of the Republican party today looks to be with its governors. Most of them were re-elected by huge margins, in gratitude for their effective reforms that limited state government, and their measured moral guidance. The noteworthy exceptions were the defeats of the incumbent Republican governors of Alabama and South Carolina, Fob James and David Beasley. And the state that sits between those two, Georgia, rather unexpectedly and easily replaced one Democratic governor with another.

Many explanations have been offered for these results. The Republican gubernatorial candidate in Georgia, Guy Millner, had twice before lost statewide. There was an unexpectedly large and monolithic African-American turnout in the region. But the key to all three of these exceptional Republican defeats was, oddly enough, the Georgia state lottery.

The Democrats in South Carolina and Alabama were strongly in favor of launching state-run lotteries, while Beasley and James were clearly against them. Bowing to success, Georgia's Republican candidate for governor declared his enthusiasm for the existing lottery, but the outgoing Democratic Governor Zell Miller, the originator of the games, insisted in commercial after commercial that he had anointed the Democratic candidate as the protector of his baby.

The lottery fever visible in these three states, and other parts of the country as well, reveals much about both the 1998 election and the character of American politics today. The news, on the whole, is quite unsettling. But just as a work of political art, you've got to give the Georgia lottery its due.

Narrowly approved in a 1992 referendum, its undeniable success has made Governor Miller enormously popular. Contrary to the experience of many other states, lottery sales have been large and growing ($1.72 billion in 1997) and the money really has been spent on education projects. In particular, the lottery funds Georgia's HOPE Scholarships, which allow high school students with a B average (a sizable majority of middle-class students) to attend a state college tuition-free. Or the students may receive $4,000 off private-college tuition in Georgia.

These scholarships have tended to keep Georgia students in Georgia for college and have been a great boon for both Georgia institutions and Georgia parents. Berry College in Rome, Georgia, the private institution where I teach, has more and better students as a result, and not only has my job become more pleasant, my salary has also increased. Admissions standards at the University of Georgia now rival those of Michigan and Virginia. Meanwhile in neighboring states, excellent colleges that have depended on Georgia students, such as Furman University in South Carolina, have had corresponding dips in the quality and quantity of applicants.

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Polls show that more than two-thirds of the voters of Alabama and South Carolina favor a state-run lottery whose revenue would be devoted to education, just like Georgia's. And although many evangelical Christians regard gambling as immoral, the lottery even has some conservative appeal. Business interests see it as a way of painlessly improving education in southern states, without increasing taxes. (Actually, educational quality isn't connected to government spending, but that perception exists.) "South Carolinians are a conservative bunch, and they see a lottery as a voluntary tax that you only pay as you play," says that state's governor-elect Jim Hodges. There's nothing more libertarian than a voluntary tax!

Over the last few years, people from Alabama and South Carolina have participated heavily in the Georgia lottery, subsidizing Georgia education. The Democratic candidates in South Carolina and Alabama both ran commercials that praised the Georgia lottery and showed Georgians thanking suckers from other states for playing their game. Shouldn't Alabama and South Carolina, the Democrats ask, have their own game for their own suckers, their own voluntary tax?

On these expedient grounds, the case for a lottery seems so strong to many people that they assume only religious zeal can explain why Governors Beasley and James reject the cause. In this view, the governors' beliefs blinded them not only to what was required for their re-election but to what is advantageous for their states. Democratic strategists were so thrilled to be handed victories on a platter that they did not reflect that Beasley and James refute the typical Democratic charge that Republicans only use religion for political gain.

James said he couldn't live with himself if he waffled even slightly on the issue. Over in South Carolina, the pro-lottery crusade caused Beasley to lose a double-digit lead in the polls. Late in the campaign, hoping to take the lottery off the table and regain his lead, he said he would allow the lottery choice to be made by referendum. But he also insisted that any lottery he administered would not "prey on the basic instincts of our poor and our needy."

How one could run a lottery that didn't exploit the poor and the desperate is not clear. The only idea I can think of is to sell tickets solely at yacht clubs. Lottery patrons in Georgia are disproportionately the poor, and any effort to bypass their trade would produce a lottery with little revenue. There is a strong connection in my state between a county's poverty and the per-capita lottery revenue it generates. So if you look at lotteries as anything other than a source of political payola, it is hard not to share Beasley's moral concern, even if you don't share his religion. Unfortunately, the payola gusher is all most voters can see right now.

Since our lottery has had strong pro-Georgia and pro-education effects, for a Georgia parent and professor like me to write an anti-lottery article may seem not only perverse but ungrateful. Knowing there is no chance of repealing the Georgia lottery, some might even accuse me of trying to stop South Carolina and Alabama from establishing lotteries in order to keep Georgia revenues up.

Yet it is puzzling why Democrats, who loudly proclaim themselves the friends of the poor, do not oppose a lottery. Democrats have traditionally demanded progressive taxation and governmental redistribution of income from the rich to the poor. But lotteries do exactly the opposite. They vacuum money from poor households and counties and channel it to middle- and upper-class counterparts.

Lottery supporters respond that they're not really supporting a tax. Nobody has to play. If it is a tax, it's a tax on the stupid, not the poor. (And isn't that, some ironic soul might add, rather sound from a Darwinian perspective, to take from the ignorant and give to the smart?)

Of course in reality, Georgia doesn't simply make the lottery available to those who want to play. It hires expensive advertising experts who produce high quality commercials to seduce people into playing in sufficient quantity to keep state revenues high. The commercials all purvey the fantasy that winning the giant jackpot will allow you to fulfill your wildest dreams. Yet the odds against winning that prize are astronomical. The commercials aim to put people out of their minds, to make them stupid. And the poor and the desperate, whose lives are most difficult and hopeless, are most easily seduced by such manipulation. They are insidiously coaxed away from using their present resources to improve their condition, and instead instructed that success in life is the result, not of disciplined effort, but of dumb luck.

When I raised this objection in one of my classes (full of middle-class students almost all of whom receive $4,000 a year from lottery revenue), an intelligent young lady responded that she didn't believe Republicans like me cared about the needy. The proper reply is that we care above all about the character of all human beings, including the poor, and that the lottery leads the poor to be morally worse, and even poorer, than they otherwise would be.

The lottery also leads members of the middle class to be worse than they otherwise would be. The great enemy of reducing the size of government in the name of personal responsibility is the sense of middle-class entitlement, a devotion to undeserved benefits that are in the long run unaffordable. Middle-class Americans are naturally inclined to want both low taxes and also lots of government programs that make life easy. When they are eventually compelled to choose between one or the other, that compulsion makes them principled. They tend to choose lower taxes and so endorse personal responsibility over unearned entitlement. But a lottery promises that the state can deliver entitlement programs like free tuition without compelling people to pay for them through taxes. By freeing people from the human necessity to choose, a lottery appeals to a retrograde fantasy shared by nearly all citizens of a permissive democracy—a free lunch.

So there turns out to be a connection between the Democratic support of the lottery and the Democratic defense of President Clinton. In both cases, the battle cry is that results, not character, is what matters. People should greedily prefer whatever makes their lives easy and pleasant, no matter what the cost to personal responsibility. In South Carolina and Alabama, and perhaps Georgia too, the party of greed in 1998 was the Democrats. This admittedly partial explanation of the unexpected defeat of two Republican governors from the the deep South is, in the long run, the most instructive and troubling lesson of the election of 1998.

Peter Augustine Lawler teaches political science at Berry College in Georgia.

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What Should Conservatives Be Seeking?

A valedictory address on liberty, license, and the American dilemma

By Senator Dan Coats

Dan Coats—a popular Indiana Republican in the prime of his powers—is voluntarily retiring from the U.S. Senate this month. Following is our adaptation of a recent speech in which he suggests a course for America in the testing times ahead.

Today, people throughout the world are inspired by the hopes of America's Founders. But we should also be instructed by their fears. In 1819 John Adams asked Thomas Jefferson, "Will you tell me how to prevent riches from being the enemy of industry? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly?" When the Founders turned from dreaming to worrying, they worried about this: How could a free and prosperous people preserve a moral culture? How could a commercial republic, celebrating individual liberty and personal gain, cultivate concern for the common good and moral restraint? Would the spirit of freedom undermine the habits of character that make freedom noble and possible?

The Founders believed a free republic requires a certain kind of citizenry, one whose internal virtues would temper our political and economic liberties. Internal virtue would promote obedience to laws out of choice, not fear; it would encourage the pursuit of happiness over the pursuit of mere pleasure; it would promote public and not just private interests.

The forms of democratic government—its checks, balances, and rules—are not sufficient to achieve these things. "Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt," Samuel Adams warned.

The Founders assumed religion would be a critical instrument of civic education, so they celebrated faith, even when they did not share it. John Adams was not a churchman, but he wrote, "One great advantage of the Christian religion is that it brings the great principle of the law of nature and nations—love your neighbor as yourself, and do to others as you would have that others should do to you—to the knowledge, belief and veneration of the whole people."

The Founders sensed that a tension might develop between the spirit of religion and the spirit of democracy. Adams worried aloud that "commerce, luxury, and avarice have destroyed every republican government." The Founders feared citizens might come to view freedom not just as the goal of their *government* and their *economy*, but also as the goal of their lives. Freedom as a moral goal is empty and often dangerous, because it can lead to the tyranny of unbridled appetites and self-interest. The Founders agreed with the sober English statesman Edmund Burke: "Men of intemperate mind never can be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

This is a hard teaching, and it makes many modern Americans uncomfortable. But the Founders knew self-government is possible only when citizens tightly govern themselves, and that freedom requires a citizenry sharing some broad moral vision of what is right and good.

Paradoxically, America is a liberal country that relies on the vitality of conservative institutions teaching moral habits to keep us free. The experiment is conducted on a tightrope. If moral absolutes are harshly imposed through institutions, we sacrifice freedom. But if liberalism, relativism, indi-

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vidualism, and materialism undermine the authority of traditional institutions to shape moral citizens, we will also lose our freedom, by a different route. This places Americans in a delicate position: How can we nurture the virtue of a free nation and still leave it free?

An illustration used by Michael Novak makes this point. He asks us to examine the Statue of Liberty. "Look at the statue closely. It is the figure of a woman, in French iconography the symbol of wisdom. In her uplifted hand is the torch of reason warding off the mists of passion and ignorance; in her other hand, the Book of the Law. Liberty in this representation is ordered liberty, liberty under the sway of reason; liberty under law. This is not, Lord Acton said, the liberty to do as one wishes; it is the liberty to do what is right."

In the last few decades a good deal of obvious human suffering has given rise to doubts about our current arrangement of liberty and law. Easy divorce, for example, has brought new destruction to the lives of children, making them prone to violence, depression, suicide, educational failure, sexual aggression, and drug abuse. There is a conflict here between the rights of adults to do as they please and our duties to protect fragile minors from being scarred by others. Similar arguments could be made regarding sexual liberty that leads to poverty and pain, or alcohol use that leaves carnage on the roads, or gambling that disrupts families.

When these bad moral choices are rare, isolated, and punished by stigma, they remain private tragedies. But when these moral choices are prevalent and threaten to dissolve the norm, when 70 percent of children will spend some time in a broken home, when in some communities 90 percent of births are illegitimate, these private tragedies gather into major social problems, complicating the lives of every citizen, leading the young into dark and empty valleys.

After decades of "liberation" from traditional norms, family obligations, and community expectations—all obstacles to personal freedom and self-expression—haunted voices are calling out indictments of our times: sons and daughters betrayed by their fathers; victims tortured by crime; young persons under the death sentence of a sexual disease; women in poverty and lonely abandonment. Together these citizens might ask, Where is my liberty in this system of absolute liberty?

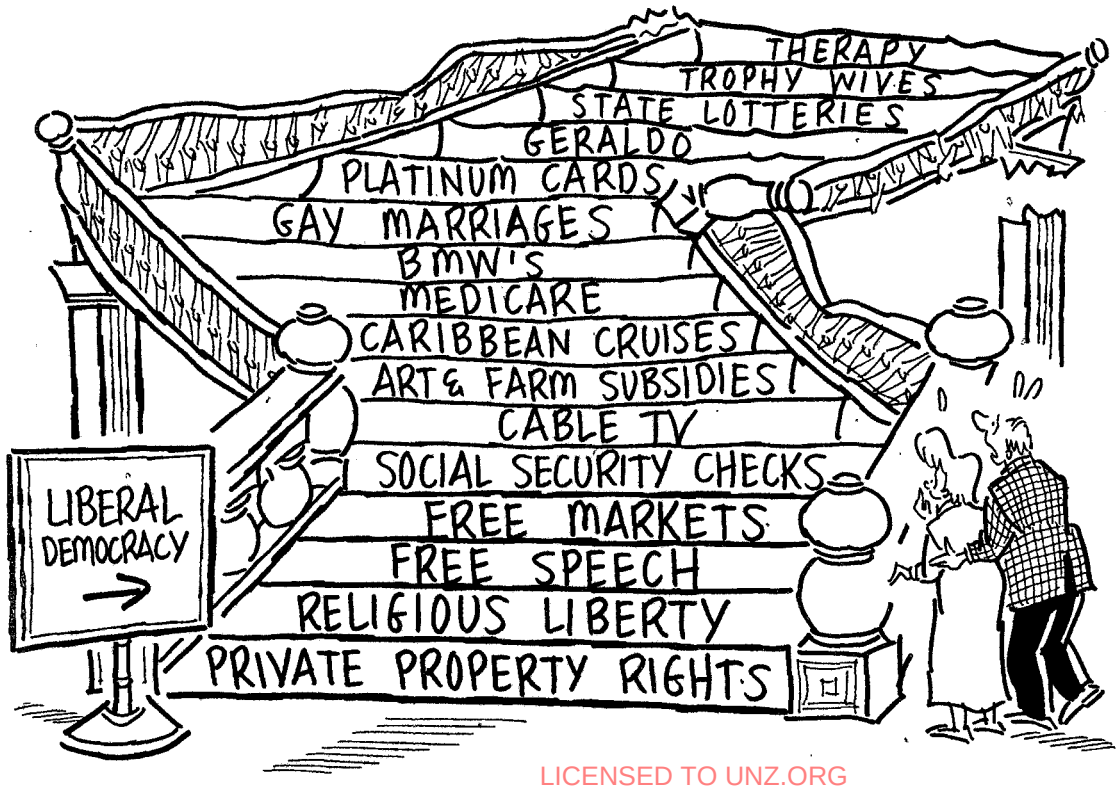
Great forces in our society are now unleashing destructive individualism, making civic education more difficult. But some of those same forces have created wealth and propelled social progress. They have simultaneously built American greatness and undermined American character. They are a mix of light and shadow, cursed blessings of American life.

The first of these mixed blessings is government. It would be simple blindness to ignore the achievements of our government this century. In 50 years it saved the world and liberty itself from two totalitarian states, sponsored the Manhattan Project and the Apollo program, granted voting and other civil rights to African Americans, and delivered millions of the elderly from destitution.

But it is also impossible to deny that the bloated size of our government has damaged the character of democracy and the nature of citizenship. At the beginning of Andrew Jackson's administration, the federal government excluding Congress and the military totaled 352 individuals, serving a population of 12.5 million. In 1815, President Madison paid a single secretary out of his own pocket, and the Supreme Court met for two months a year in a boarding house. In today's America, on the other hand, there are 18.6 million government employees—one for every 17 people.

The Faustian bargain of contemporary government has traded our spirit for sustenance. As government has taken more, citizens have retained less. And centralized power has often replaced communities and families and discouraged community participation, thus weakening the skills of *self*-government. Government has subsidized self-destructive behavior, sent perverse moral messages, and encouraged habits of depen-

This is adapted by the editors from a speech sponsored by the Center for Public Justice, subsequently published by Baker Books under the title Mending Fences.



Mark Armstrong

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dence, sometimes reducing citizens to serfs.

I have seen firsthand how a well-intentioned government can treat living communities as the playthings of utopian planners. After my undergraduate work, I joined a Chicago consulting firm whose purpose was to implement President Johnson's Great Society programs. One of my tasks was to go door to door in poor neighborhoods, convincing residents it was a good thing that their houses were to be bulldozed to make way for high-rise public housing. I showed them pictures of the clean, new apartments with modern elevators. But many protested and even wept when hearing the news because, to my astonishment, they loved their homes and the decayed neighborhood around them. But none of this mattered; they had to go anyway, because our good intentions required it.

It turned out, of course, that they were right. Their homes and neighborhoods, bad as they were, were living communities. Our government high-rises were sterile, impersonal, and soulless. In the years since, they have become unworthy of human habitation, a shame to our nation and a symbol of the destructive potential of goodness without wisdom. My experience in those homes and neighborhoods profoundly shaped my view of government and politics.

If government is one powerful force that has complicated the cultivation of American virtue, the second cursed blessing is a force harder for most conservatives to discuss. For many American families find that the most disruptive force in their moral lives is *not* government. It is a powerful market that aggressively sells an ideology of consumption, immediate gratification, sexual freedom, and resentment of authority. They find more to fear from rock stars like Marilyn Manson and the moral anarchy of the Internet than from the paternalism of the Great Society and Social Security.

Once again, we cannot downplay the accomplishments of free markets that are the wonder of our age. They are history's most powerful tool to eliminate poverty, defeat disease, and extend life. And they make a moral contribution to every society that embraces them, justly rewarding risk, creativity, energy, and merit.

But we also cannot downplay how markets can undermine the traditional institutions conservatives want to conserve. I have spent a considerable part of this past year on two issues: the Internet and the content of television programs. In both cases we are dealing with particularly pure free markets. Television programming depends directly on viewer demand. It embodies democracy. But much of what we get is vacuous or positively warping. As author George Gilder—no enemy of economic liberty—observes, "Under the sway of television, democratic capitalism enshrines Gresham's law: Bad culture drives out good, and ultimately porn and prurience, violence and blasphemy prevail everywhere from the dimwitted 'news' shows to the lugubrious movies."

Conservatives must understand what most parents know by hard experience: Markets both respond to appetites and incite them, because it is possible to make a considerable amount of money feeding the weakness of human character. This is true of movie companies that assault taboo after taboo in a never-ending race with boredom. It is true of entertainment companies that increase their market share with lyrics about the murder of policemen and the dismemberment of women. It is true of companies that market malt liquor specifically to inner-city communities. It is true of companies that accumulate profit through the astounding proliferation of gaming, drawing income and savings from many who can least afford it. And all this is causing a backlash. From the Disney boycott, to Bill Bennett's pop culture campaign, to the movement for television ratings, to the fight against legalized gambling—all these movements are directed toward limiting the destructive impact of markets, not government. And much of this activity is on the pro-market right.

This is the return of the Founders' fear that we could lose the moral order that makes it possible to be a liberal society. A wealthy nation can still display a poverty of purpose. And eventually there comes a wisdom won from pain: Liberty unconstrained by character can destroy freedom.

So: How do we encourage the virtue of a free nation and still leave it free? In this task we must understand that not all of civil society is created equal. The success of voluntary associations in creating civic virtue depends directly on the health of two institutions that cannot be called voluntary, at least not in the same way the Elks or bowling leagues are voluntary: family and religion. The family initiates us into the traditions of the human race—loyalty and love, diligence and duty. Religious institutions instruct us in the spiritual purposes that make a good life possible, causing us to sacrifice "a thousand ephemeral pleasures" in pursuit of "lasting happiness," as the French sage Alexis de Tocqueville put it.

We need to recognize that in a liberal society that elevates individual rights, it takes effort to maintain family and religion. For liberalism has a tendency to extend its assumptions to every area of life, dissolving bonds of duty and obligation.

All around us we see attempts to reinterpret or reinvent traditional institutions, stripping them of their moral demands, making them more acceptable to democratic men and women. But those moral demands are the essence of faith and family. And there is nothing more likely to destroy those institutions than the application of democracy to morality. We have all heard the refrains, "Who are you to determine what a family is?" and "No one should judge anyone else"—arguments that re-

America is a liberal country that relies on the vitality of conservative institutions teaching moral habits to keep us free. The experiment is conducted on a tightrope.

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duce convictions to tastes. But holding together the commitments of a family, and serving the injured, and restraining our interests for the interests of others—these are difficult moral tasks. People will only undertake them if they believe with all their heart and mind that these tasks are good, noble, and virtuous—not just choices but immutable truths and moral laws and religious callings.

We cannot remove these moral imperatives from families and churches and expect them to perform their social function. We believe in democracy because it is better to count heads than to break them. But we must reject a democracy of values in which every belief is equally true, equally false, and equally meaningless. The first requirement of nurturing virtue in our culture is to defend the existence of virtue itself, celebrating it in our families and churches.

WE MUST REJECT A DEMOCRACY OF VALUES IN WHICH EVERY BELIEF IS EQUALLY TRUE, EQUALLY FALSE, AND EQUALLY MEANINGLESS.

I have described how a grasping, intrusive government can undercut civil society. But this should not lead to the simplistic belief that cutting government is sufficient to rebuild civil society. In fact, an effective small government is often the prerequisite of a healthy civil society. Civic engagement is difficult when front porches attract random gunfire, when public meeting places become needle parks, when evening church services are canceled because reaching them is too dangerous.

The value of effective government has been proven in our recent victories in welfare and crime. When welfare reform was passed, critics predicted a million more children shoved into poverty and 11 million disadvantaged families suffering want. What has happened is the opposite. In one year, nationwide welfare caseloads dropped by 18 percent, falling in every state except Hawaii. Faced with a changed welfare culture of time limits and work requirements, many recipients have changed themselves.

Crime is another area in which effective government has proven its value. For a generation we were confidently told by experts that criminal behavior was hopelessly rooted in immovable root causes. Then the public got fed up and started building prisons, toughening sentencing, and tightening laws. William Bratton became head of New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority in 1990 and banned panhandling, removed graffiti, and arrested fare beaters, many of whom turned out to have weapons. The felony rate in the subway fell by 75 percent. Then Bratton took over the New York City Police Department, applying the same principles and attacking disorderly behavior, aggressive panhandlers, and squeegee men. By the end of 1995 residents of New York were less likely to be robbed or murdered than at any time in 25 years.

Effective government strengthens those who obey and uphold civilized standards, making law-abiding citizens feel less lonely, isolated, and besieged. It cannot impose virtue, but it can help create an atmosphere in which civic institutions can do their work. That atmosphere is fostered when local communities restrict pornographic bookstores and liquor stores, and prosecute prostitution, when states reform divorce laws to favor the interests of children, when the federal government favors families and charities in the tax code, and fights the importation of drugs. The federal role in these efforts is limited because it takes local communities to enforce community standards. Yet at whatever level, the law has an important role to play. When it comes to the decency of public culture, the moral atmosphere in which children are raised, or the stability of the family, government "neutrality" is indistinguishable from surrender.

Government can also play a role in strengthening the compassionate work of private and religious institutions. The state cannot directly rebuild civic institutions. But we must find ways to encourage these institutions to renew themselves—for the alternatives are either a destructive indifference to human suffering, or an eventual filling of the breach by Big Brother government.

My struggle in the last few years has been to translate some of these ideas into legislation. The goal, whenever possible, is to apply private resources of compassion and moral instruction to public problems, expanding society while limiting the state.

One of the centerpieces of my efforts is a charity tax credit. It would allow every taxpaying family to give $1,000 of what it owes the government each year to a private charity in their community instead. I believe most people would prefer to fund the Salvation Army than the Department of Health and Human Services, Habitat for Humanity instead of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In welfare policy, I am convinced, devolution and block grants are simply not enough. It's not sufficient to shift programs from federal bureaucrats to state bureaucrats, who often have the same blind spots and limitations. We must break completely the monopoly of government as a provider of compassion, and return resources instead to individuals, churches, and charities. As Pope John Paul II has written, "needs are best understood and satisfied by people who are closest to them and who act as neighbors."

Many of our worst social problems will yield only to moral solutions: renewal of parental commitment to children, internal restraint of impulsive violence and aggressive sexuality, a return of public spirit and civic engagement. The institutions of civil society teach these lessons. By supporting them broadly, government can promote moral answers to human problems without favoring any one moral or religious vision. It can encourage the work of civil society without overwhelming it with rules and restrictions. It can encourage the virtue of a free nation and still leave it free.

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Is America Turning A Corner?

Data by
Karl Zinsmeister • Stephen Moore • Karlyn Bowman

About 30 years ago, America had a national nervous breakdown. In the last half of the 1960s and the early '70s, a vast range of social trendlines headed south. We endured a crime wave, an illegitimacy surge, a welfare explosion, a drug abuse crisis, a deluge of abortions, a boom in divorce, a suicide spike. Cultural radicals took over many of the nation's institutions. The size and intrusiveness of government raced upward. Families collapsed. In many cities social order evaporated.

Worried Americans looked on in horror as multiple forms of social breakdown accumulated into a self-reinforcing spiral. The chorus of warning and worry reached a crescendo in the late '80s and early '90s. In his speech at the 1992 Republican National Convention Pat Buchanan decried the "cultural war in America." In 1994, William Bennett published his *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, containing what Rush Limbaugh called "some of the most chilling statistics I have ever read." Bennett's portrait of U.S. behavioral trends found that "almost every modern-day social pathology has gotten worse." The result, he said, has been "a palpable cultural decline over the past 30 years."

These heralds were right: The 1960s opened an era of dangerous social regression in our nation. Both the breadth and the speed of our decline were breathtaking: violent crime quadrupled in just 30 years; illegitimate births, single-parent households, and teen suicides tripled; the rate of marriage was almost cut in half. In Washington, D.C., there were more abortions than live births. In many cities a *majority* of children were being reared in fatherless homes.

But over the last decade, something remarkable has happened. The alarm bells rung by cultural conservatives seem to have been heeded by many Americans, and a new pattern of recovery and even reversal has emerged. This positive pattern is beginning to look every bit as broad and interlinked as our social collapse was when it showed up in the late '60s. But judge for yourself: On the pages following, we provide clear documentation of this brand new—and wholly unpredicted—revival.

Whether the encouraging trends depicted here will continue, deepen, and spread remains to be seen. Most of these turnarounds are very fresh, at most a few years old. But the sheer number and simultaneity of the shifts suggest that something important is now afoot in American culture.

To help make sense of these surprising new developments, *The American Enterprise* invited a group of distinguished trend watchers to look over our newly collected evidence and then speculate on exactly what's going on, who or what is to be credited, and how securely these improvements are rooted. Their views—ranging widely—follow immediately after the factual data.

—the Editors

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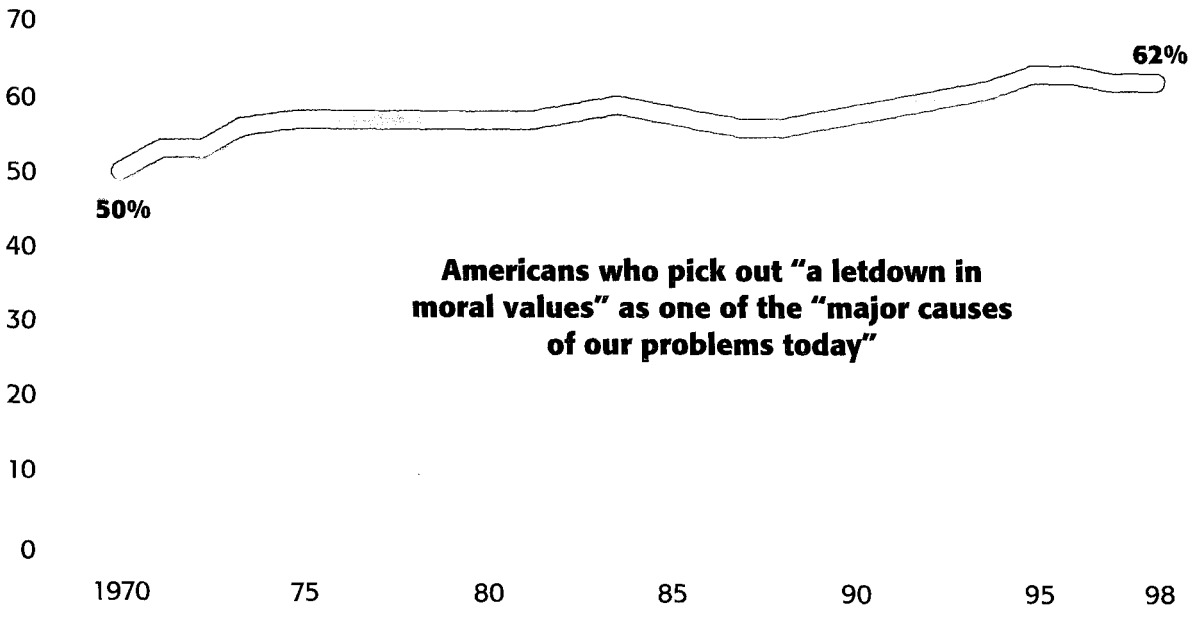
Americans now place moral decline at the top of their list of items needing repair—ranking it higher than any economic, foreign, or other domestic threat. The fact that the proportion of the population expressing concern is at record levels can be read as an indication that our moral problems are deepening. But it is also evidence that citizens are ready for countermeasures. Indeed, much evidence—like the stern polling responses graphed at the bottom of this page—indicate that many citizens are already fighting back with new attitudes and behaviors.

MORAL TURNAROUND?

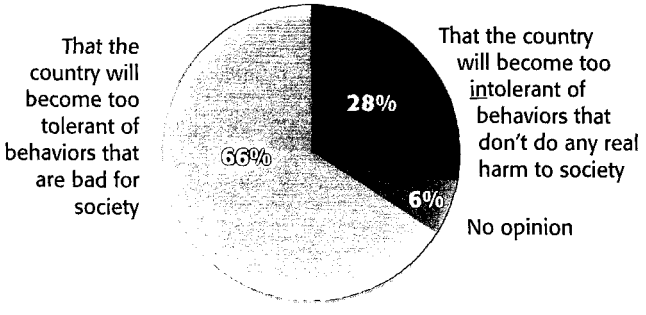


Source: Roper Starch Worldwide polls

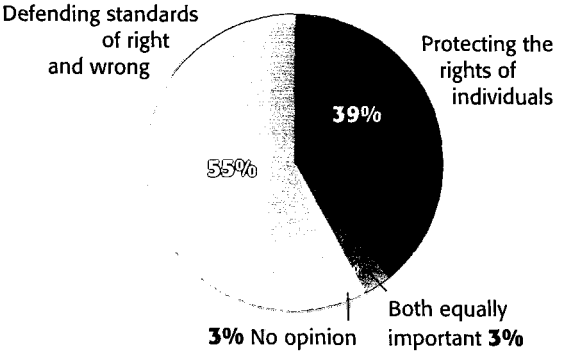
RIGHTS vs. RESPONSIBILITIES

1998

Which worries you more...?



Which is more important...?



Source: Washington Post/Harvard/Kaiser Family Foundation poll, July–August 1998

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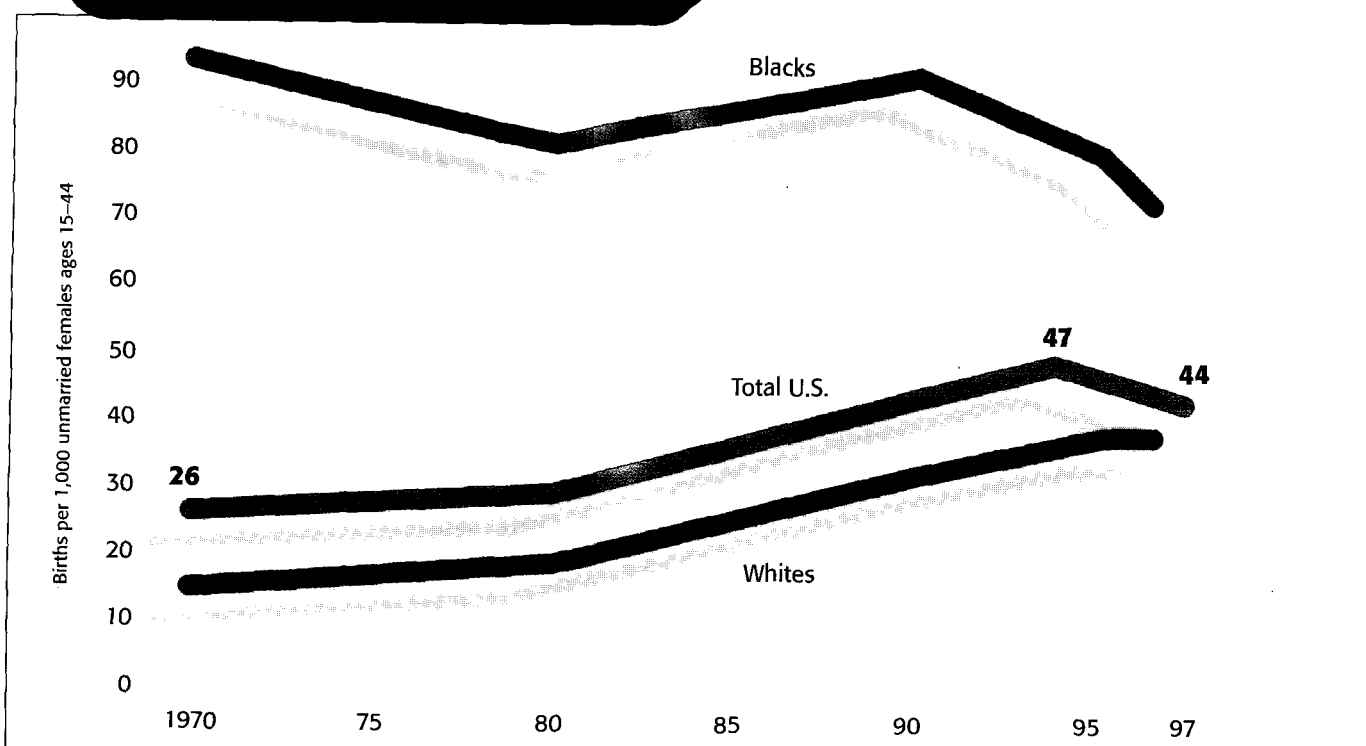
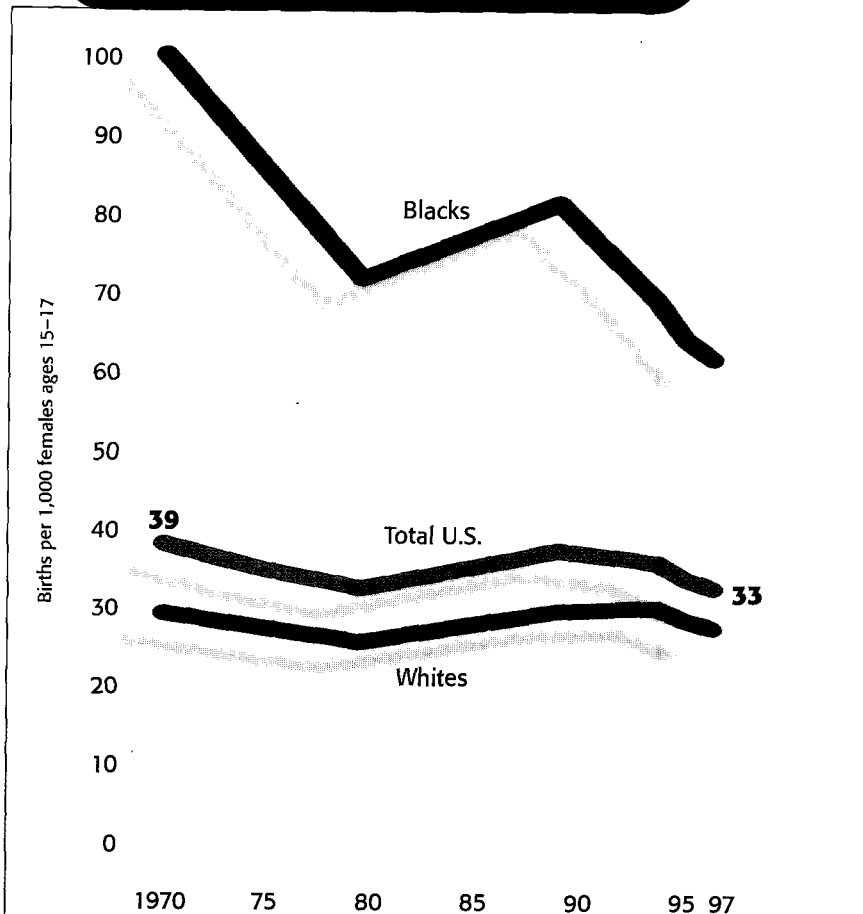
ILLEGITIMACY



Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

The drop in illegitimate births depicted here is one of the most heartening American cultural developments in years. The rising proportion of U.S. babies born to unmarried parents has been one of our most worrying social trends for decades, because it fuels many other problems like welfare dependency, crime, and school failure. But at long last, white illegitimacy has plateaued, and black births out of wedlock are tumbling—down by a fifth in the last seven years, to the lowest rates since measurement began in the '60s. The fraction of all U.S. births coming from unmarried women is still distressingly high. But for the first time in a generation, the trend is in the right direction. Meanwhile, *teen* birth rates are also being driven down—according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute by "greater emphasis on abstinence, more conservative attitudes about sex, fear of AIDS, and better contraception."

TEEN BIRTHS



Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

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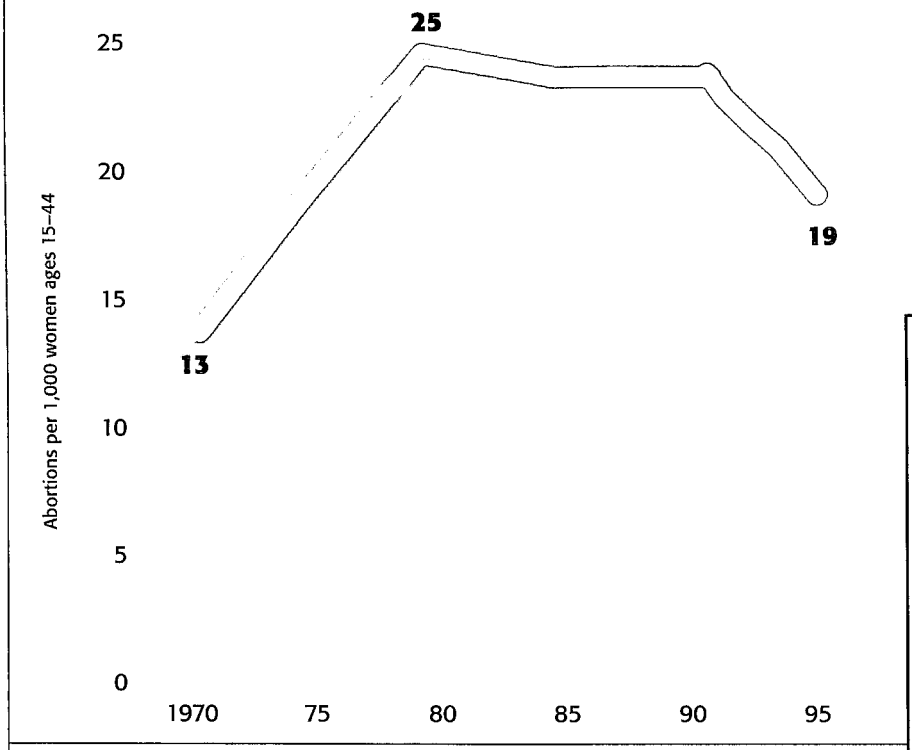
Is America Turning A Corner?

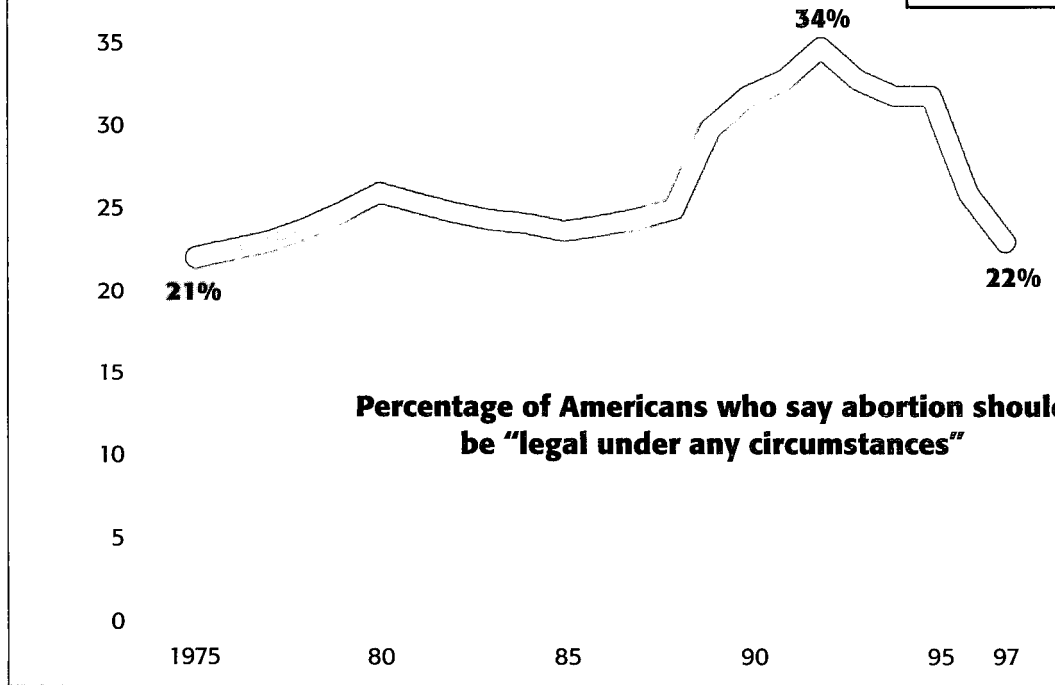
ABORTION RATE



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control

Abortion has been on a gentle decline in America for more than a decade. Both the total number of babies aborted and the rate per 1,000 fertile women have fallen. So far, the difference amounts to about a quarter-million fewer terminated fetuses each year. This is linked to increased public uneasiness over the procedure. Support for narrowing the use of abortion has been gathering since the early 1990s, with recent exposure of the "partial birth abortion" procedure lending additional impetus to public reservations.

ABORTION OPINION



Source: Gallup

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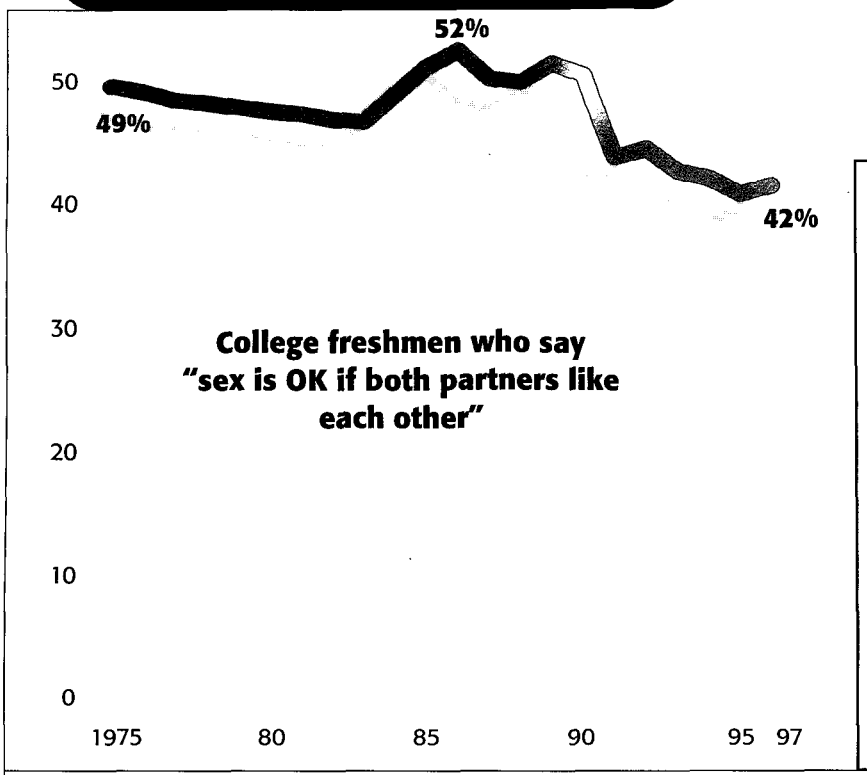
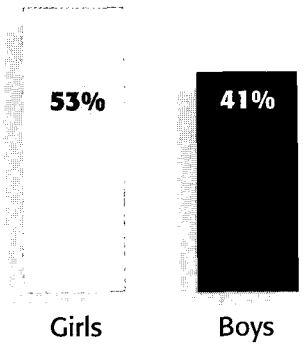
PREMARITAL SEX



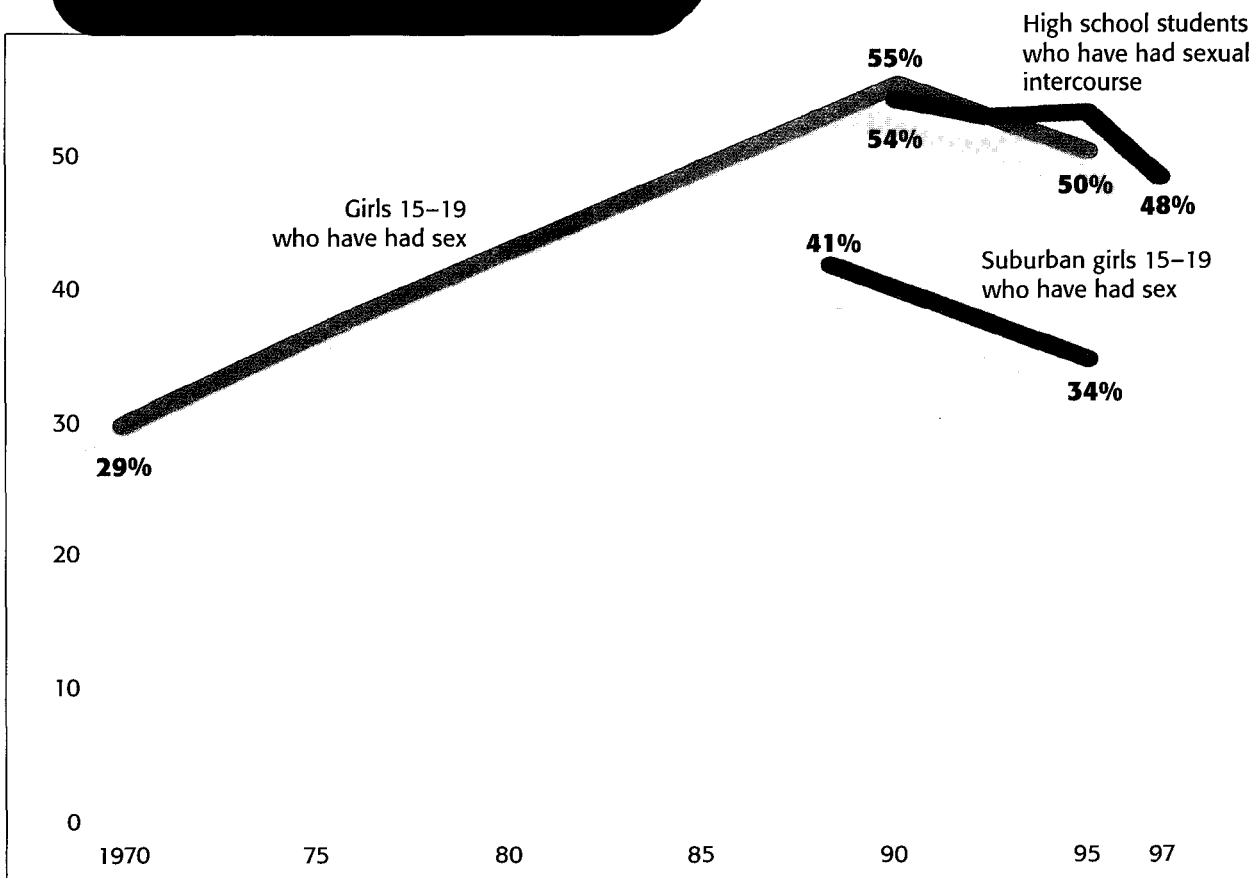
1998
Teens 13–17
saying sex before marriage is "always wrong"



Source: CBS/New York Times poll

Source: The American Freshman, UCLA

TEEN SEX



Sources: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, U.S Centers for Disease Control

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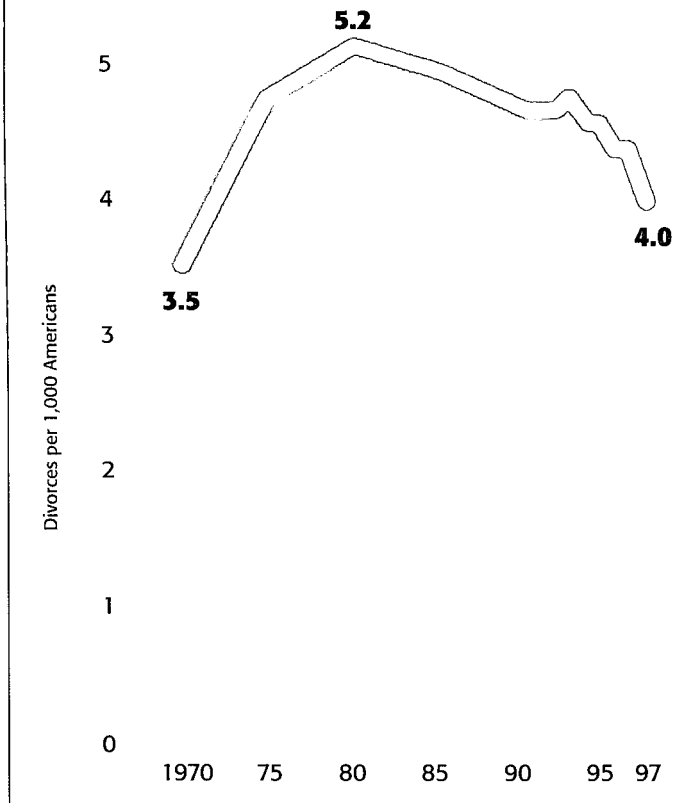
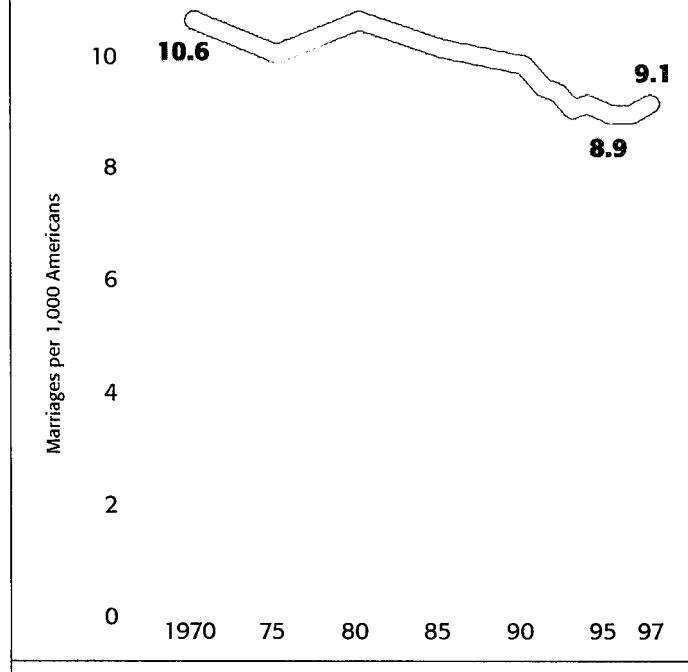
Is America Turning A Corner?

DIVORCE



Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

MARRIAGE



Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

Somewhat surprisingly, given the saturation of popular culture today with gross sexual imagery, young Americans are having second thoughts about the advisability of early sexual experience. Literally a majority of teens now disapprove of and avoid early sex. The shift toward more traditional views partly reflects bitter experience. Many of today's young Americans have been badly burned by their parents' experiments in sexual liberation (as reflected in the divorce boom graphed to the left), and are seeking more stable relationships for themselves. The bloom is clearly off the divorce rose. Close to half of all couples still crack up, however, and it is not yet clear whether the Humpty Dumpty of loyal marriage can be put back together by future generations. Will the divorce rate keep sliding? Will last year's small uptick in the marriage rate be sustained?

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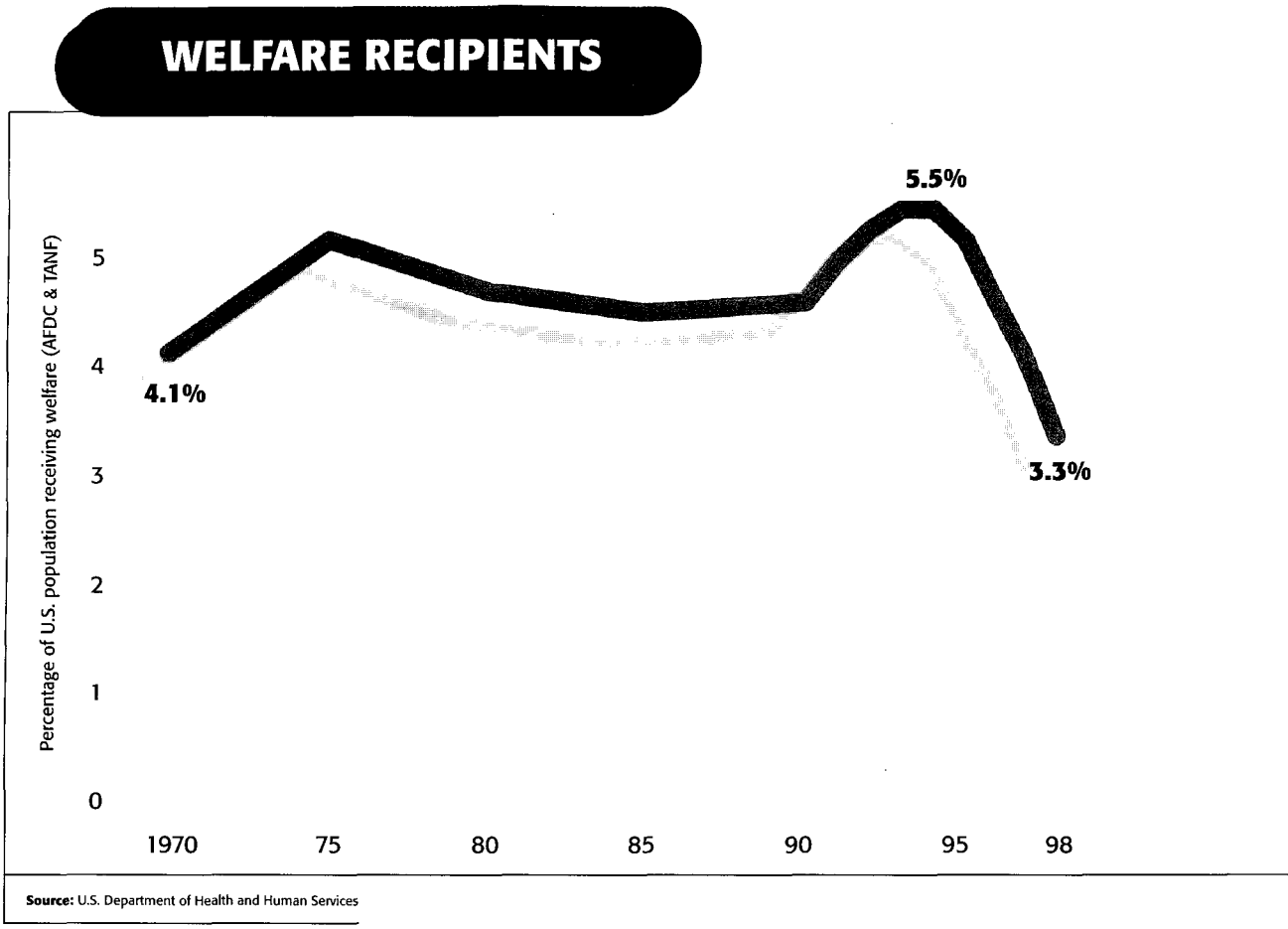
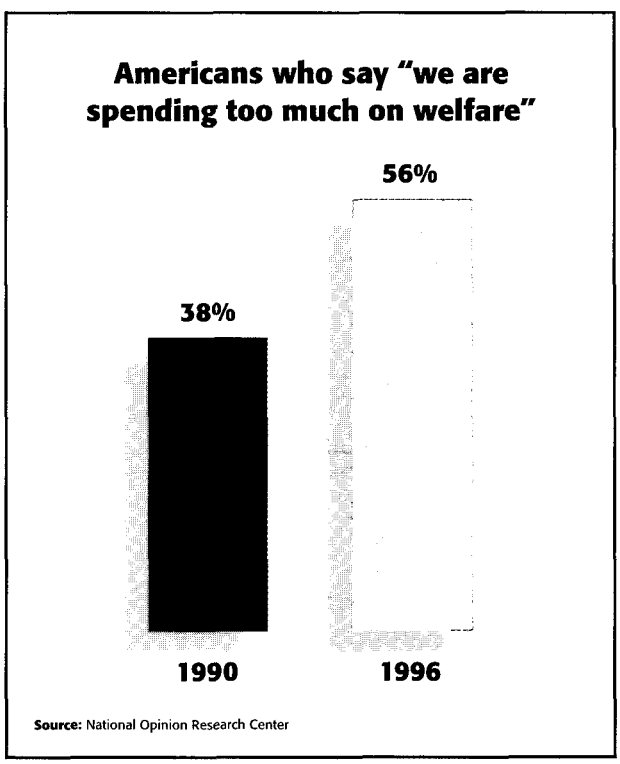


Another startling and powerfully encouraging departure of recent years is the sudden decline in welfare dependency. After 25 years of uninterrupted ascent, the number of Americans collecting welfare has wrenched downward. The national course has been changed by tougher public attitudes toward the corrupting influence of government checks, new demands on recipients from the states, all capped by national reforms ending the welfare entitlement. Even in inner cities, where welfare had become a way of life, stark reductions are taking place.



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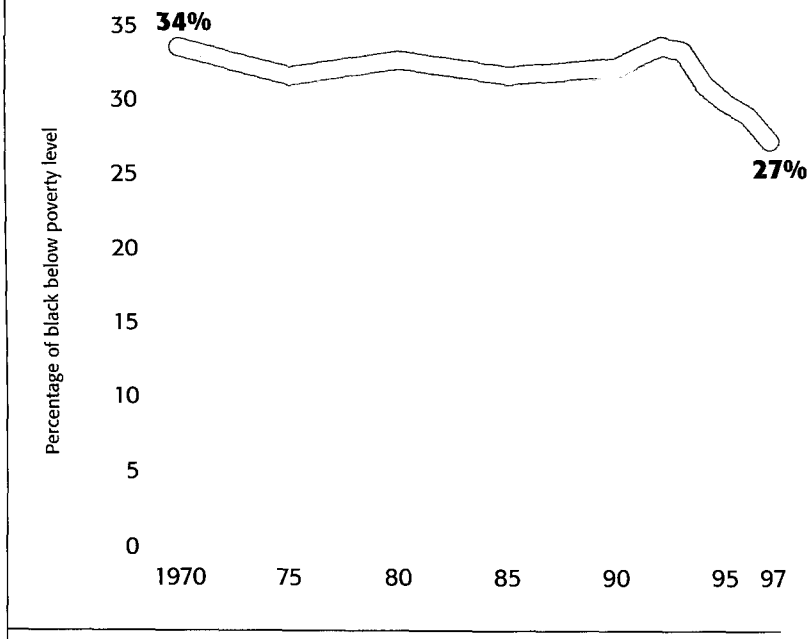
Is America Turning A Corner?

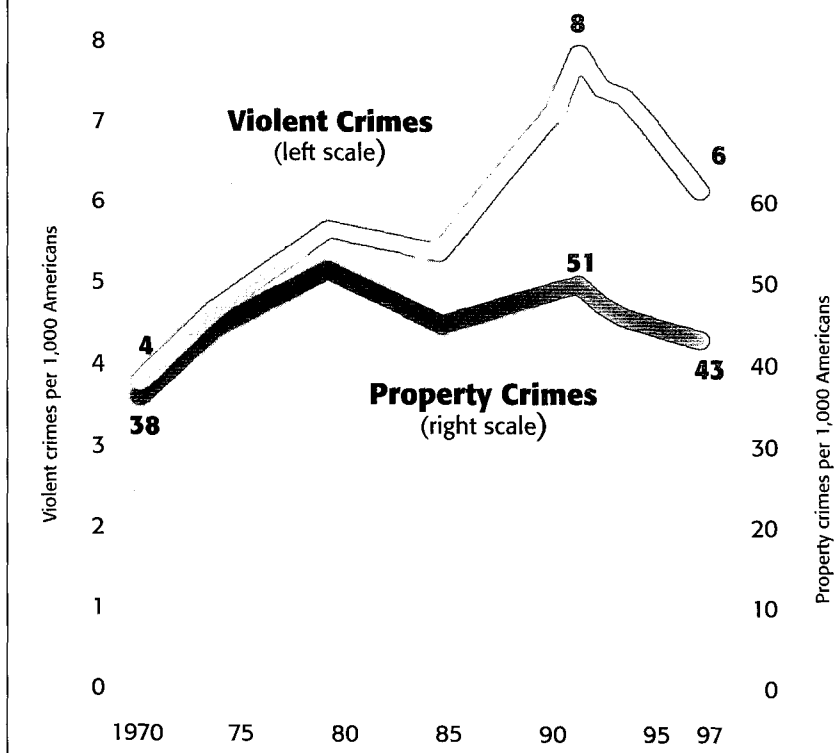
BLACK POVERTY



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

One of the dramatic byproducts of welfare reform has been a sharp drop in black poverty. Details in the latest government reports show dramatic improvements in the economic status of black households—primarily because fewer and fewer female-headed families are poor, as they are being pushed from welfare dependence into paying work. Nearly as stunning as the recent drops in welfare and poverty have been the national reductions in crime. Rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and murder are at or near quarter-century lows. Here as with welfare, toughened public opinion and drastically tightened laws and administrative practices by governments have made the difference.

CRIME



Source: U. S. Federal Bureau of Investigation

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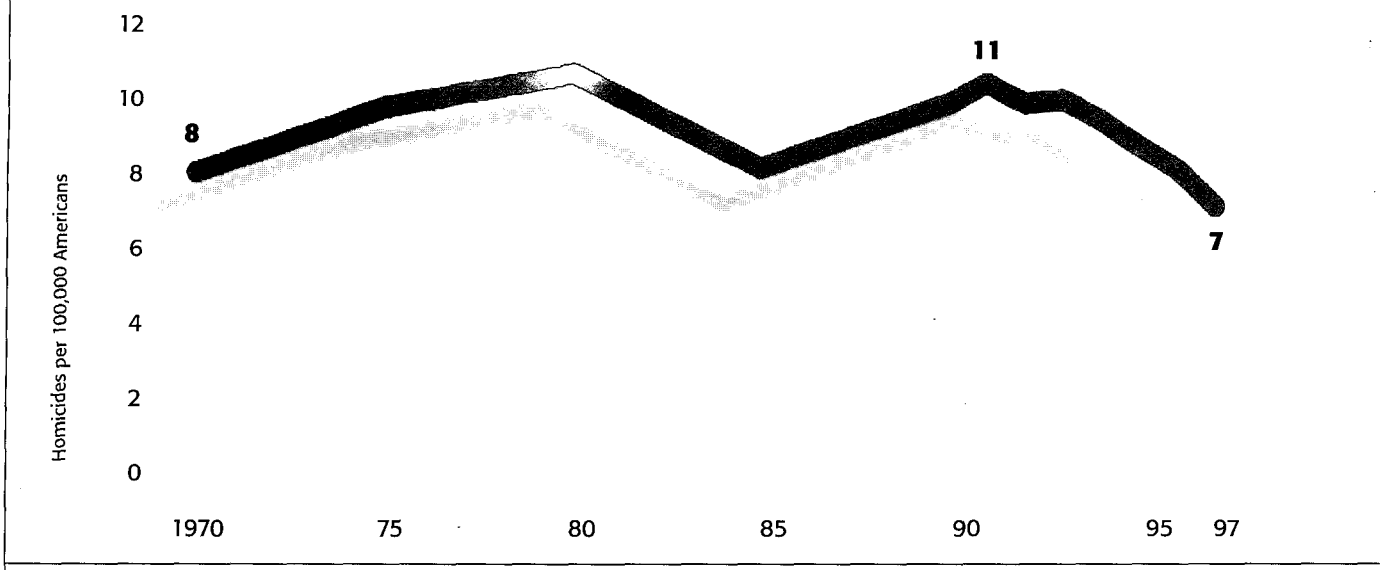
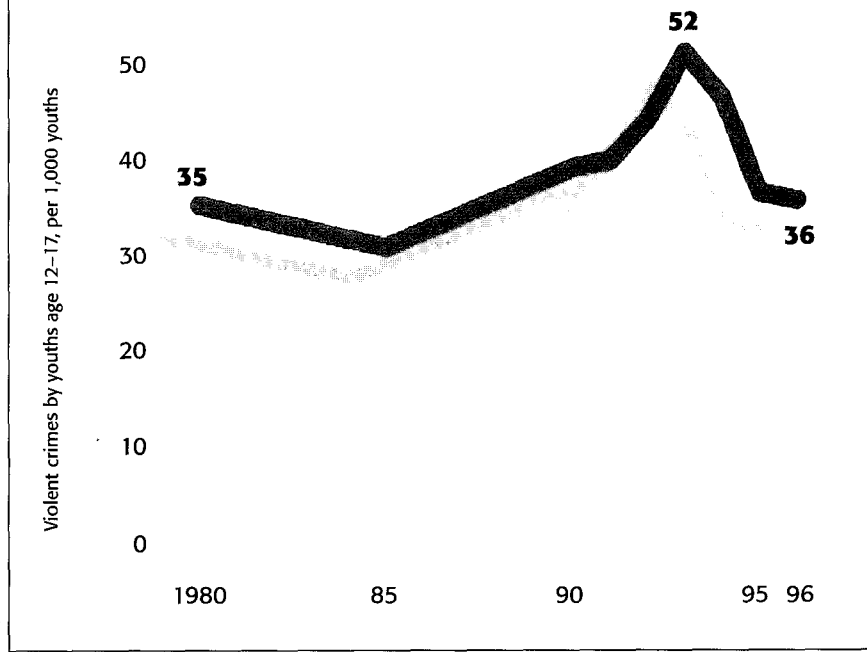
HOMICIDE



Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

The murder rate in the U.S. is at its lowest level since the 1960s. It will have to drop by roughly an additional fifth, though, before it reaches the lows achieved in the 1950s. Declining juvenile infractions indicate that today's encouraging crime sag is likely to continue for some time (because most adult perpetrators start as juvenile offenders). It is in America's major cities that the reversal of crime rates has been felt most positively. In the 1970s and '80s many city streets were ruled by drug dealers and gangs. Fed-up Americans finally declared war on these criminals, demanding tougher sentencing, more prisons, and extended lock-ups. This worked—as you can see in the bottom-right chart on this spread (or, more directly, by walking down many U.S. city streets). As the probability of going to prison for murder rose 53 percent, the murder rate dropped 30 percent. As the probability of imprisonment for robbery climbed 28 percent, robbings decreased 29 percent.

JUVENILE CRIME



Sources: U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics; U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation

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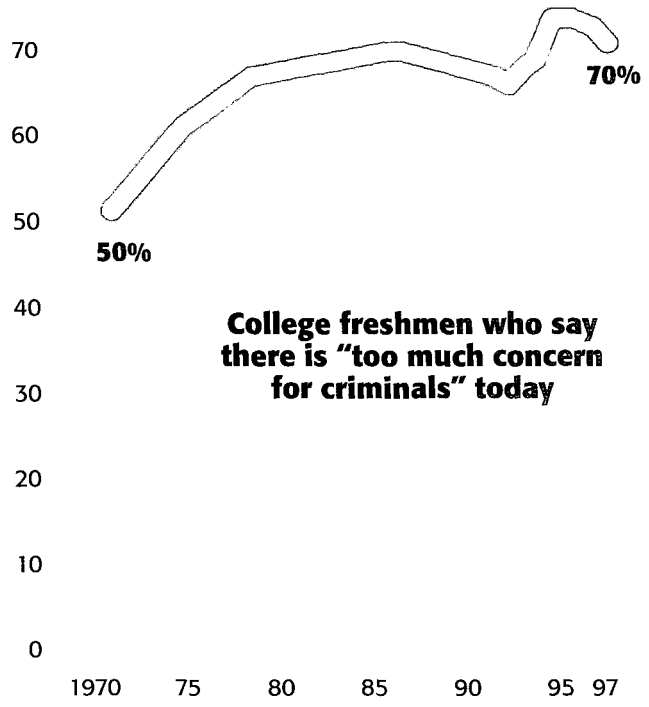
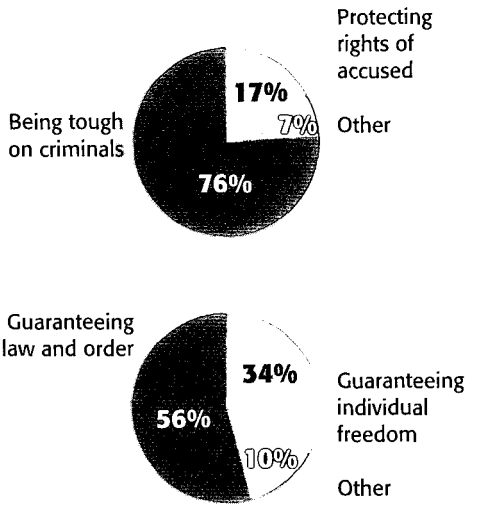
CRIME BACKLASH



Source: The American Freshman, UCLA

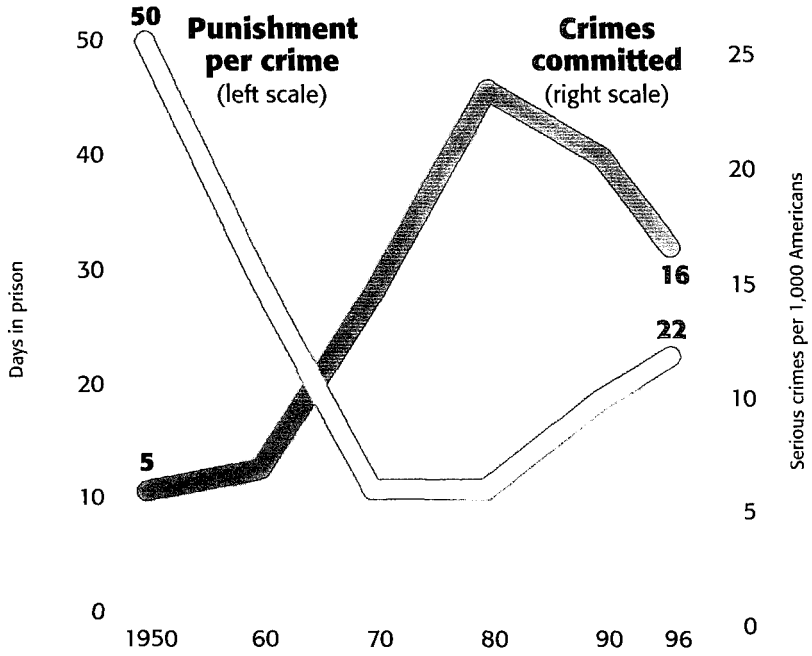
1998

Q: Which is more important?



Source: Washington Post/Harvard/Kaiser Family poll, Aug. 1998

PUNISHMENT & CRIME



Note: Punishment per crime calculated by multiplying probability of imprisonment by days served for serious crimes. Serious crimes defined as violent crimes plus burglary.

Source: Morgan Reynolds, "Crime and Punishment in America," National Center for Policy Analyses, 1997

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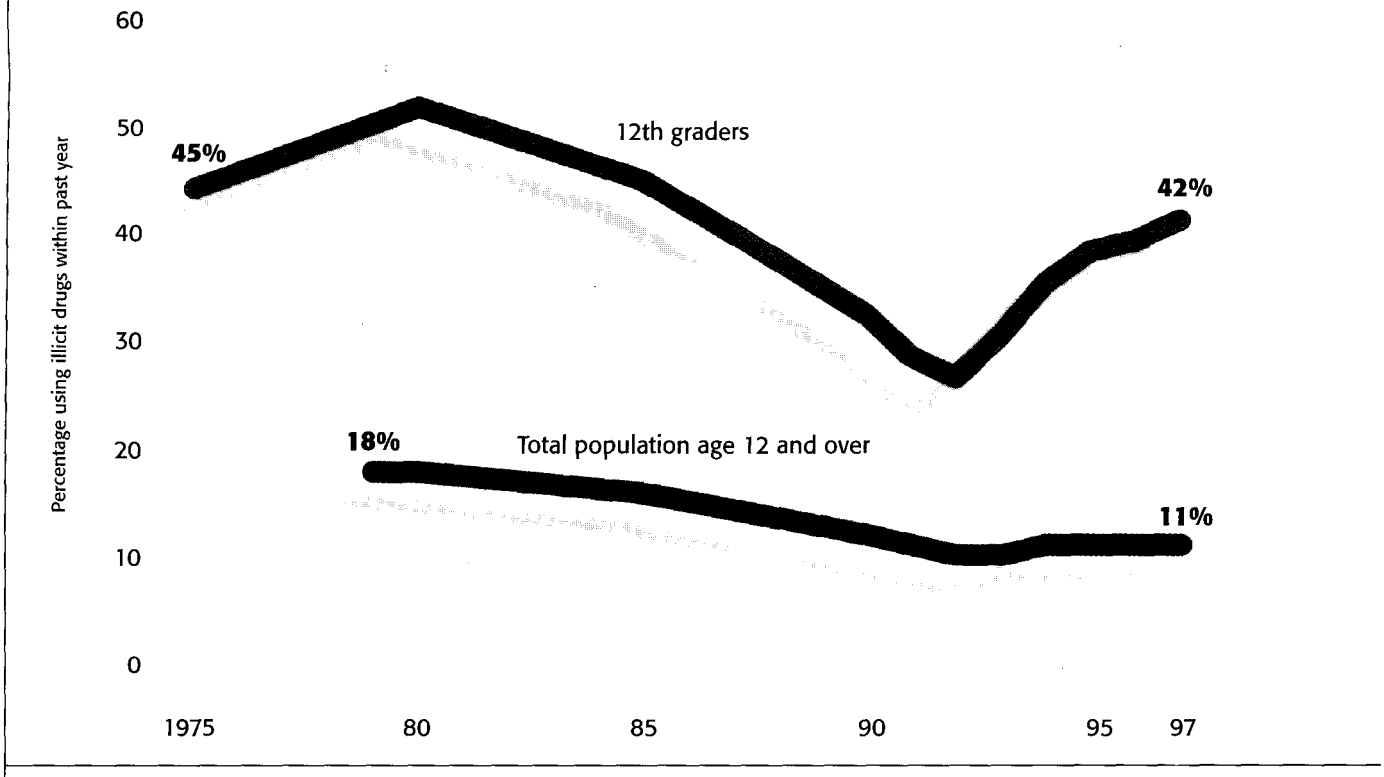
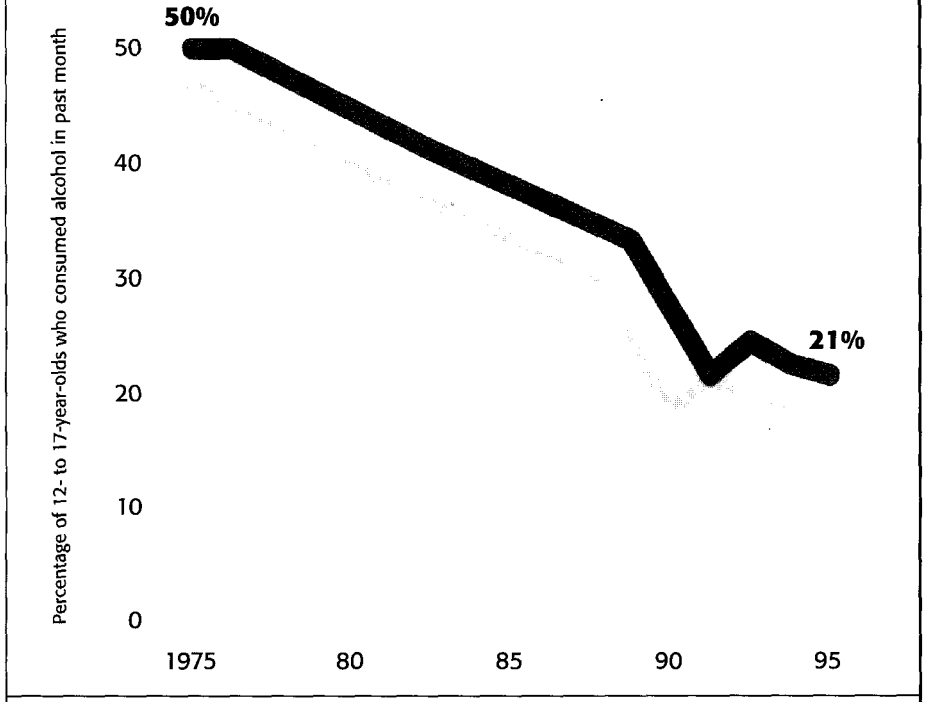
DRUG USE



Sources: University of Michigan; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

TEENAGE DRINKING



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control

The trends in drug use are somewhat different from others depicted in these pages. The U.S. drug wave peaked in the late 1970s, with record levels of abuse. Then there was dramatic progress throughout the 1980s and early '90s, particularly in reducing consumption among teenagers. Much of this progress at the high school level was lost, however, during the last five years. Despite this, drug abuse is still down dramatically from our late '70s nadir for the country as a whole, with cocaine and marijuana use at roughly half their 1970s levels. Teenage drinking has fallen more consistently over the last two decades. And teen suicide, after a worrisome twenty-year jag upward (tied to the breakdown of families) is now reversing. Simply dropping out is another way some youngsters waste their lives, and this too is in decline, steadily.

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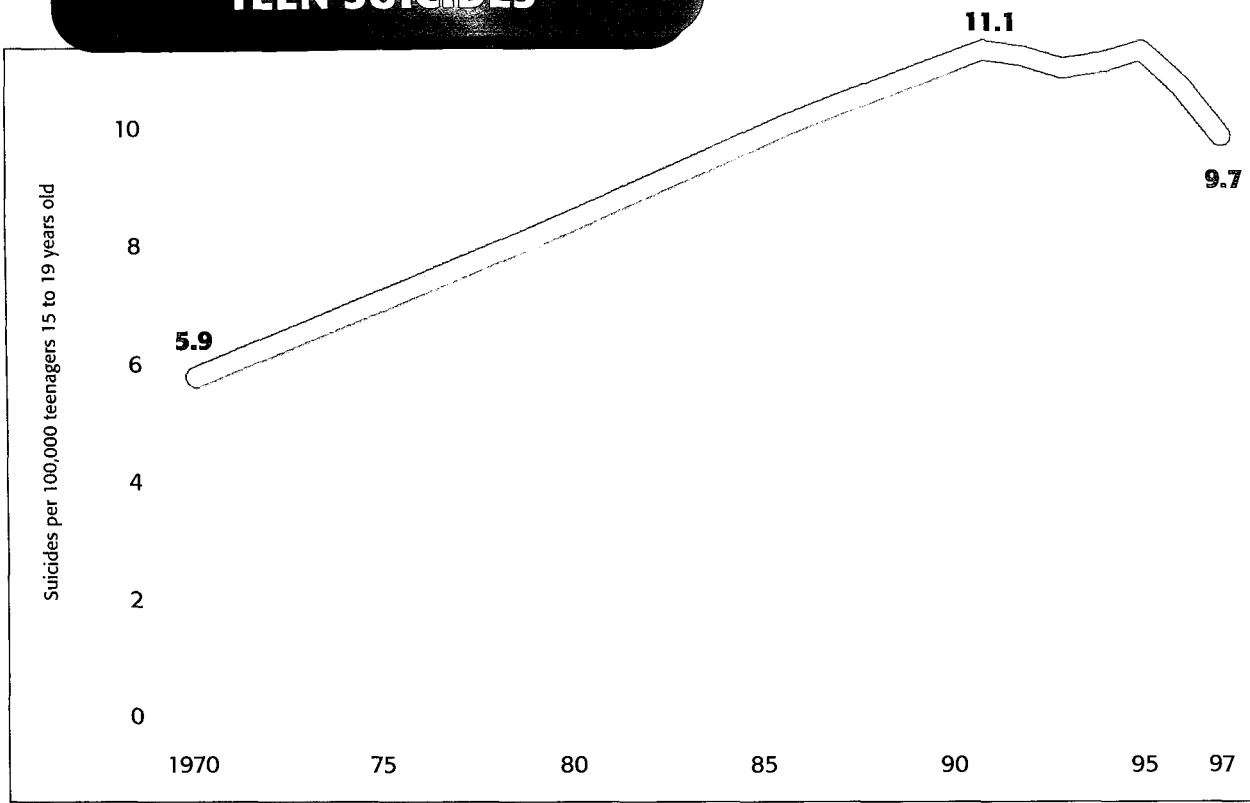
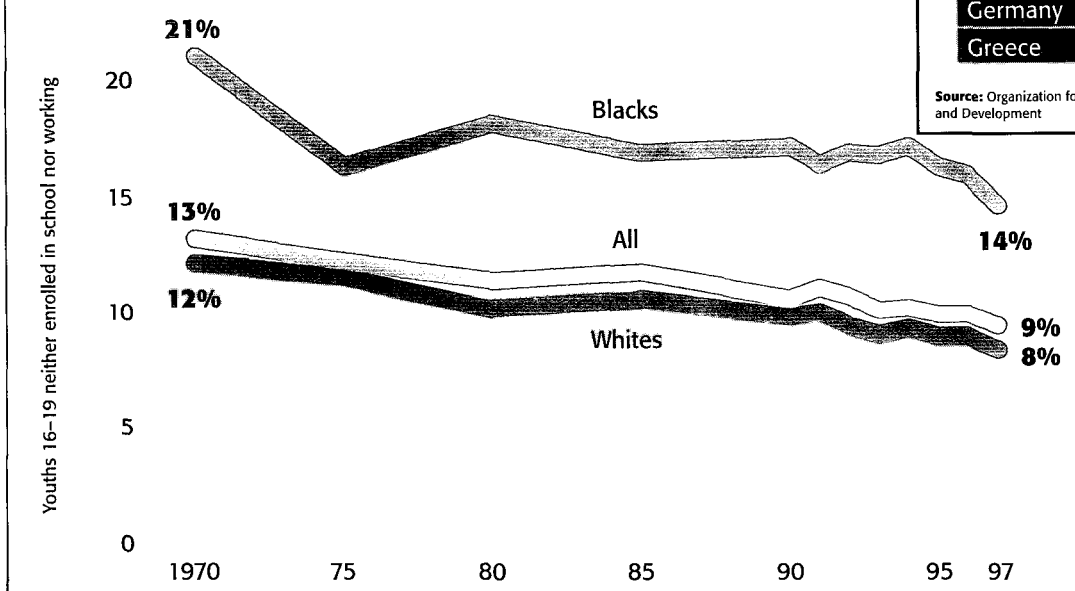
TEEN SUICIDES



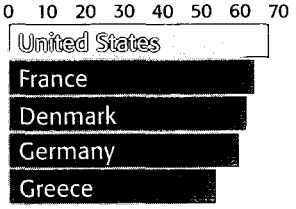
Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

DROPOUTS



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

1994
Percentage of population 5–29 enrolled in school



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

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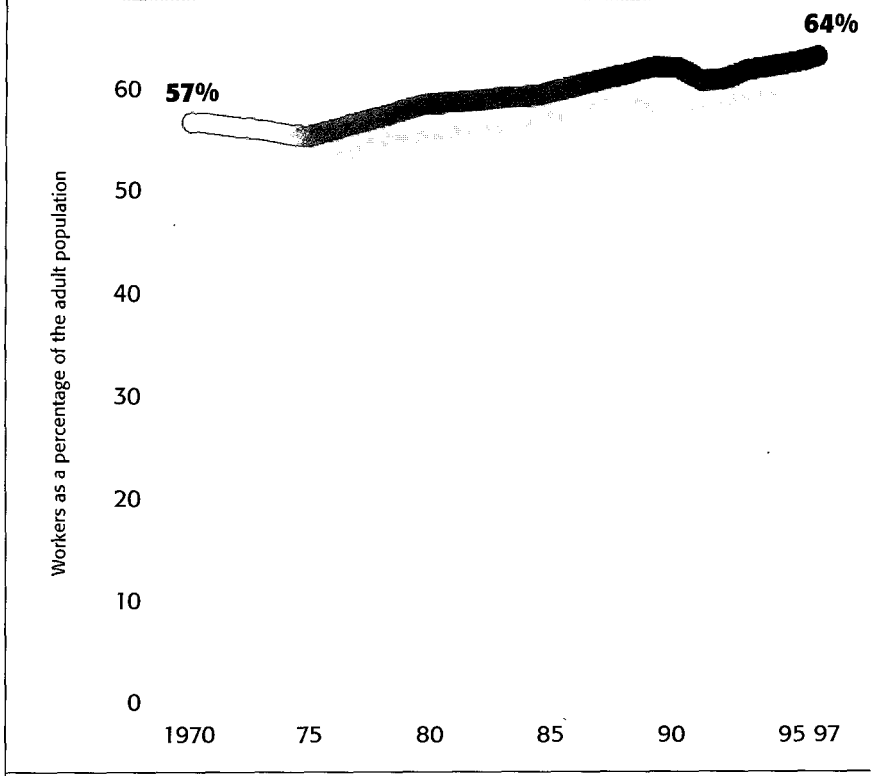
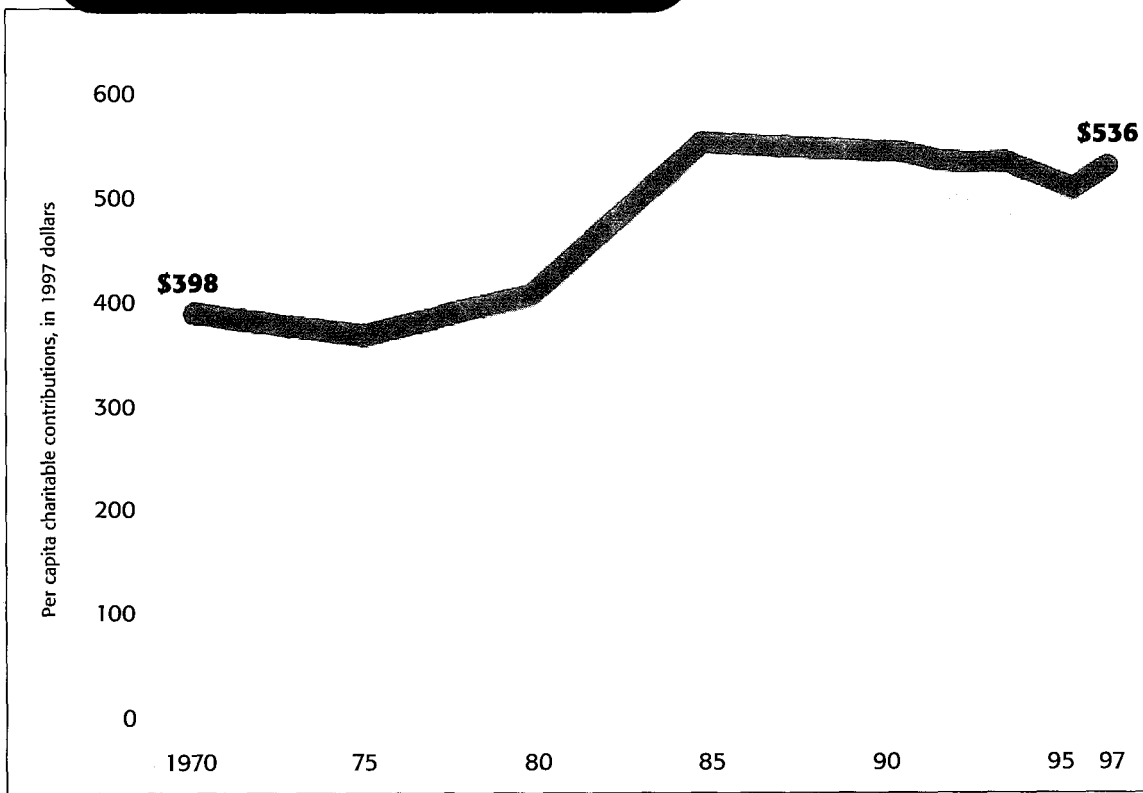
Whatever other problems the U.S. may have, a lack of work ethic is not one. Across society, our work patterns are commendable—higher than our own recent efforts, and much higher than those of comparable nations. American generosity is also noteworthy. The charitable donations depicted here take both inflation and population growth into account, and thus represent real increases in giving per person. One foundation of our impulses to produce and share is religious belief, which is gently rebounding after going into decline during the 1960s and '70s. Religious renewal is most visible among the young.

WORK ETHIC



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

CHARITY



Source: Editors' calculations from Giving USA, American Association of Fund-raising Counsel

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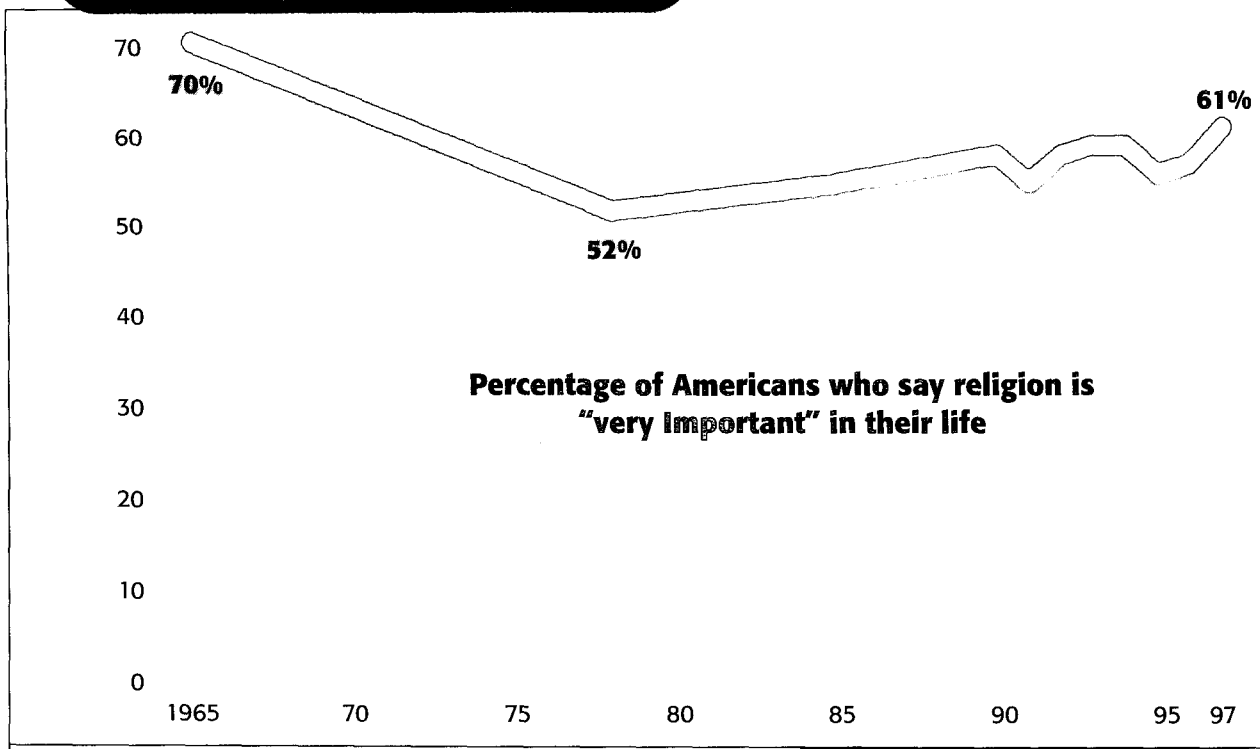
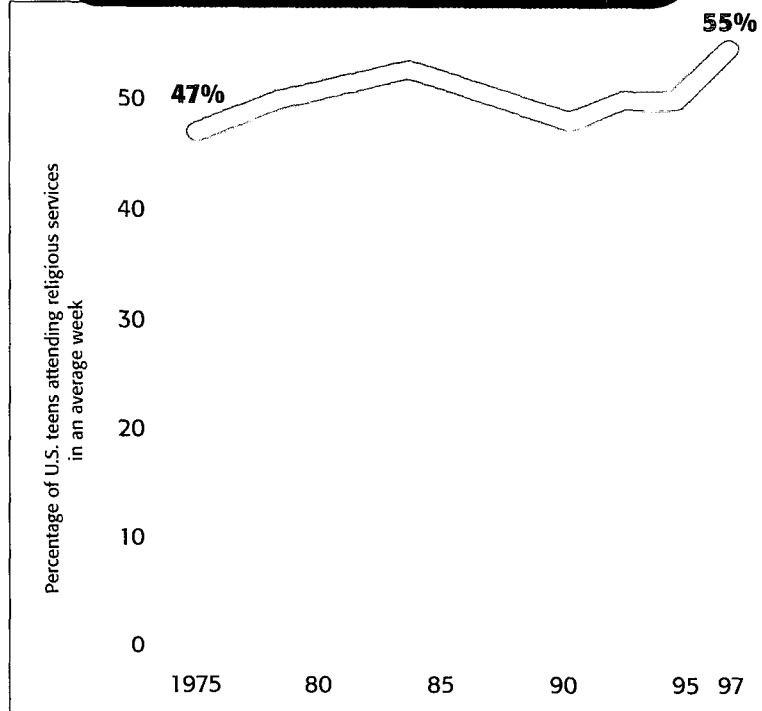
RELIGIOUS BELIEF



Source: Gallup

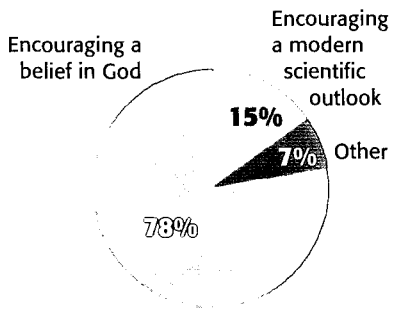
CHURCHGOING TEENS



Source: Gallup

1998

Q: Which is more important?



Source: Washington Post/Harvard/Kaiser Family Poll, August 1998

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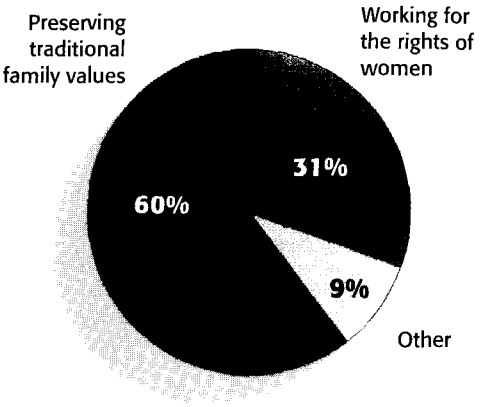
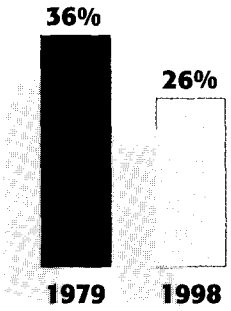
FAMILY VALUES

1998

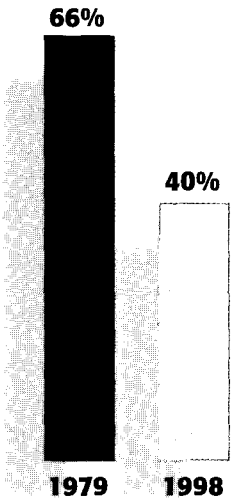
Q: Which is more important?



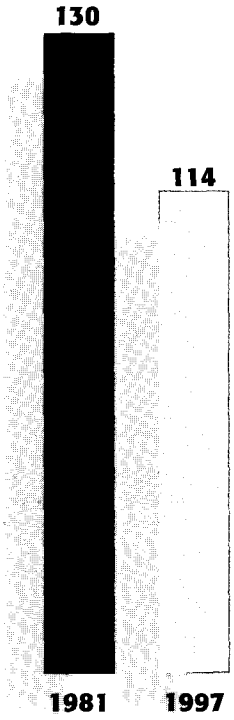
Working women who said: "To me, a career is as important as being a wife and mother"



Working women who said: "It's not the quantity of time you spend with your children—it's the quality."



Average daily minutes children spent watching television



Sources: Washington Post/Harvard/Kaiser Family Poll, August 1998; Update: Women, Liz Nickles and Laurie Ashcraft, 1998; Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1998

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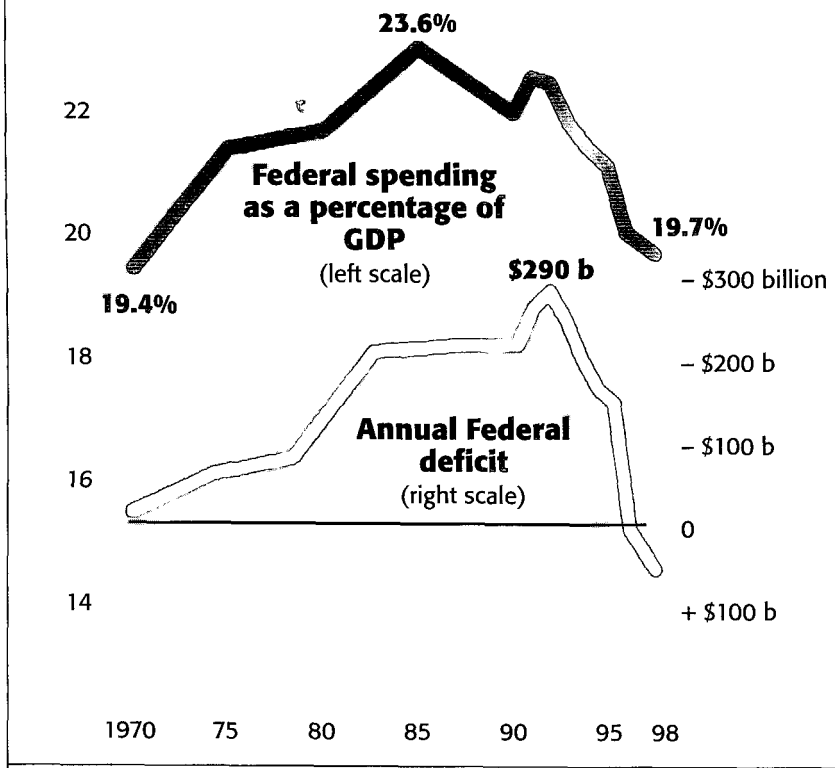
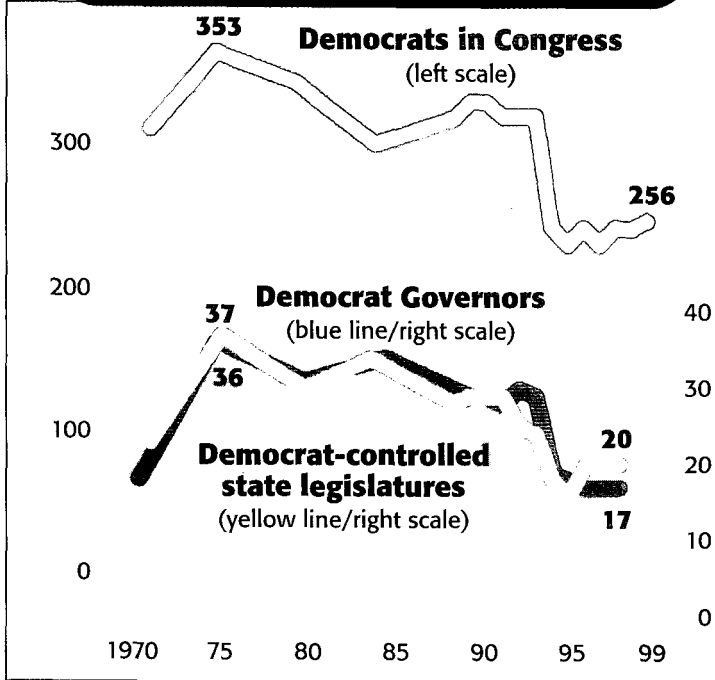
GOVERNMENT EXPANSION



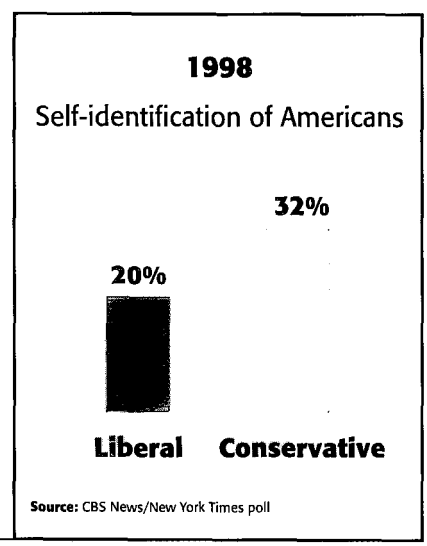
Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget

It's hard to measure the sometimes fuzzy but culturally critical behaviors and attitudes that Americans refer to in shorthand as "family values." But on page 50 we provide several indicators suggesting that the public has taken a few steps back from the emphasis on personal freedom and self-expression that so undermined family cohesion and childhood security over the last three decades. On the national level, meanwhile, there have been similar shifts away from liberalism and toward accountability, thrift, and conservatism.

POLITICAL LIBERALS



Sources: Statistical Abstract of the United States; National Journal; Congressional Quarterly



Source: CBS News/New York Times poll

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Is America Turning A Corner?

Responses by

Stephen Moore • Mitchell Pearlstein • Robert Bork
Michael Barone • Charles Bray • Daniel Lapin
Allan Carlson • John Ashcroft • Ben Wattenberg

A New Era of Civic Virtue Is Dawning

Stephen Moore

Over the past five to ten years a remarkable cultural turnabout has occurred. With few exceptions, the same social statistics that deteriorated in the 1960s, '70s, and early '80s, have improved, or at least plateaued. Since 1990, the abortion rate has dropped, illegitimate births have declined, welfare use has fallen precipitously, as has crime. It's virtually impossible to pick up a newspaper and not hear a story of social improvement. A few 1998 examples:

• "The government's survey of drug use finds that in 1996 only 18.3 percent of teens between 12 and 17 had smoked in the past month, the lowest since 1985." —*Washington Post*

• "Black Birth Rate for Single Women Is at a 40-Year Low: 18% Drop from '89 to '96." —*New York Times*

• "Property crime in the United States fell sharply between 1980 and 1996, with burglary down by almost half in almost every major city, according to FBI statistics." —*Economist*

• "U.S. teen sexual activity fell 11 percent from 1991-97 after two decades of increases." —*Wall Street Journal*

There are also signs America is experiencing a religious reawakening of sorts. Church attendance—for adults and teens—is creeping up again from its lows in the '70s. The percentage of Americans who say God is an important presence in their lives is rising (and is far higher than in any other industrialized country). The Bible is still far and away the number-one bestseller year after year, with annual sales estimated at about 30 million. Charitable giving has soared over the past decade-and-a-half to an all-time high, even after adjusting for inflation and population growth.

The most dramatic improvements in health, income, and education have generally been recorded by minorities—particularly blacks—and women. The wage gaps between blacks and whites and between men and women, for instance, have narrowed by at least half since 1980. No other ethnic group can match the recent leaps and bounds in health improvements of black Americans. While discrimination hasn't disappeared, these data strongly suggest it is less of a problem today than ever before.

Nowhere is America's renaissance more apparent than in our major cities. With sharp reductions in inner-city welfare dependency and crime, and the revival of many downtown business and cultural centers, urban America is no longer just a place where drug dealers prey on residents and single mothers on public assistance are warehoused. The improved livability of America's older industrial centers—like Cleveland, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Providence, and, believe it or not, even Detroit—is an improbable and heartening development. Just 15 years ago these symbols of America's earlier industrial heyday seemed to be slowly dying.

The resurrection of New York City in particular is nothing short of miraculous. Manhattan is visibly cleaner, safer, more vibrant, even friendlier. The overall population flight from cities has finally been arrested, and even for nonresidents, America's cities are once again becoming cultural meccas—with new symphonies, libraries, theaters, music halls, museums, and sports stadiums popping up in scores of metropolises. Of course, inner-city public schools are still rotten to the core and a huge deterrent to the residence of middle-income families. But the rapid expansion of private scholarship programs, however, are beginning to give parents opportunities to flee urban public schools without fleeing the cities themselves.

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Some curmudgeons attribute these developments to passing demographic changes instead of more lasting improvements in attitudes or behavior. It is true, for example, that part of the decline of crime rates is a result of there being fewer Americans in high-crime age groups. But even if we adjust for things like age factors, we still find strongly encouraging trends in most areas.

It is my verdict that, yes, we are entering a new era of civil virtue and cultural enlightenment in America. It is always hazardous to make predictions based on short term trends, so my judgment may prove premature. But I don't believe the nearly universal patterns in the charts preceding this essay will simply blow away.

I draw several conclusions from all this. First, conservatives have tended to be too grumpy and even apocalyptic about the trends in American behavior. The institutions of civil society did show signs of breaking down in the 1960s and '70s, but Americans are a sane, flexible, responsive people, and we are now seeing a resurgence in family, neighborhood, charity, and church strength as they have changed their minds about things and shifted gears. Even schools are starting to perform better—though vast improvement is still imperative—as students and parents are provided more choices.

Perhaps the more important conclusion one should draw from these statistics is that conservatives may just be winning the cultural war. There are many signs that the traditional virtues that once were the bedrock of America and that cultural conservatives and others have worried are in decline—hard work, discipline, stable family life, honesty, and self-reliance—are back in vogue. Today, it is the Left's values and social institutions that are in retreat.

Americans have mostly rejected the false compassion of the giveaway welfare state. They have certainly rejected the biggest lie of all: that government can take the place of a parent. The welfare reform bill of 1996 was arguably the most consequential piece of social legislation in a quarter-century. For the first time, the Left was forced to concede that the Great Society failed. Americans have likewise almost universally rejected the drug culture. Crime is falling specifically because Americans decided to put the screws to repeat criminals.

But if conservatives are to win the hearts and minds of America's youth, they have to find a way to promote virtue without sounding prudish and preachy. Conservatives sometimes rush to moral judgment too quickly, falling into the same trap as liberals: identifying a problem and then concluding "there ought to be a law." I would argue that's the problem with the V-chip, and the crusade to keep smut off the Internet. Here Gary Bauer is as wrong as Hillary Clinton: It doesn't take a village to keep a child from watching smut on TV. That's what parents are for.

For the most part Americans want the government's meddlesome arm out of their daily lives. That's reasonable, since in recent decades government has repeatedly been a source of social decline. The welfare system was the driving force behind the surge in fatherless homes and all that that produced. Government contributed to the surge in crime, especially through its drug policies in inner cities. The decline in SAT scores is a direct result of the stranglehold that the government has over education.

Conservatives shouldn't underestimate the extent to which moral suasion has been an effective deterrent to destructive social behavior. In the 1980s the Left ridiculed Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" anti-drugs campaign, but there are strong signs it worked. So did the Negro College Fund ads proclaiming "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." The anti-abortion ads championing "Life..."seem also to have helped. One big reason for the decline in abortion is, as the Centers for Disease Control put it, "attitudinal changes." More Americans believe abortion is wrong, even if they may not be fully convinced it should be illegal. Likewise, Richard Nadler, editor of the midwestern conservative *K.C. Jones Monthly,* reports that "the resurgence of teen virginity correlates with increases in the sex education strategies favored by social conservatives," including promoting abstinence in schools.

It's human nature to believe things used to be better in days past. Some things were. But many things are also better now than 40 years ago: families have much higher incomes, better housing, more amenities; far more children will go to college; our health and medicines are much better; racial intolerance has declined; women have more choices. Yes, there have been more tranquil times in the past, but in many ways, these are the good old days.

Stephen Moore is an economist at the Cato Institute.

Deviancy Is Down, Not Out

Mitchell B. Pearlstein

Asked whether America has turned a corner, I think immediately of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's idea of "defining deviancy down." As he noted, many behaviors once considered intolerable have become commonplace, without any acknowledgement that standards have been dropped. So let me interpret the data we've just been presented through the senator's prism of lowered cultural expectations.

Take divorce rates. They have held steady since the mid-1970s, even dropping slightly, after a steep upsurge in the decade prior caused largely by the spread of no-fault divorce laws, aided and abetted by the self-indulgence then swamping the nation.

Needless to say, it's good that fewer men and women are divorcing, and even better that fewer children are caught up annually in the agony. But if one looks at a graph of divorce rates all the way from 1920 to 1990, the years 1975-90 form a high plateau overlooking what is mostly a valley to the left. I say "mostly,"

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because in the middle of the valley, centered on about 1945, is an exceedingly sharp peak.

This divorce spike a half-century ago was the result of marriages failing during and after World War II, for many unsurprising reasons. Product of a world-shattering event, that was a highly unusual situation. Yet even the World War II divorce surge never approached the height of the 1975-90 plateau.

In other words, what has come to be the norm is measurably more frightening (or at least it should be) than the extraordinary, time-limited degradation of a world war. The fact that part of me is inspired to turn cartwheels because the divorce rate is reversing a bit is an exquisite example, I'm afraid, of defining deviancy down.

Take another example: Doomsayers have been pointing out for some time that the out-of-wedlock birth rate for the country as a whole today is higher than it was for African Americans in the early 1960s, when Moynihan grimly declared that the black family was in "crisis." Many, then, think it's wrong to celebrate a decline that merely takes teen sex rates from the outrageous to the, well, still outrageous.

Improvements, though modest, are clearly revealed in the nearby tables. But my own enthusiasm is constrained by my knowledge of Minnesota over the last three decades. You remember Minnesota, don't you? The state anointed by *Time* in a 1974 cover story as the one that "worked." On the one hand, conditions in my home state are still consistently, often substantially, better than in the rest of nation. On the other hand, it's hard not to be sobered by the way Minnesota has been regressing toward the national mean. Violent crime presents a stark example. It's still much safer to be in Minnesota than in most places across the country. But between 1960 and 1991, Minnesota's violent-crime rate increased by 675 percent, compared to a comparatively hygienic 355 percent nationally.

What of more recent years? A new study by my Minneapolis think tank shows that while violent crime dropped nationwide by about 16 percent from 1991-96, it rose in Minnesota by about 7 percent. So while the Twin Cities remain a good place to live, we are not enjoying the same kind of renaissance that New Yorkers, for instance, are reveling in.

I don't want to be nuanced to the point of evasion. If I'm forced to vote up or down on whether the United States has turned a corner, put me down, what the heck, as a yes. And if I'm obliged to pick one reason why this is so—beyond believing that any number of pendulums had neither room nor choice but to start swinging back sometime—it's reflected in the table showing a rise over the last two decades of people saying that religion is "very important" in their lives.

My point is not just not that people are more likely to act responsibly when they are more faithful. It's that the rise of religiosity reveals a greater willingness to give serious consideration, publicly and privately, to sensitive subjects. Reporting on the last election, the *Washington Post* noted that "Not since the civil rights era…have Democratic challengers so aggressively and openly used religious language in their campaigns." The reporter argues that the tactic is partly a reaction to the "Christian Coalition's success," but also shows a "growing realization that an enormous political prize awaits candidates who successfully tap this underrepresented pool of voters."

I don't think it's too far a leap to suggest that Americans are increasingly disposed to express appropriately "judgmental" thoughts, not just about easy things such as smoking in restaurants and recycling pop cans, but about much messier and more intimate topics, such as the manner in which babies are brought into this world.

At the organization I lead, the public events that consistently draw the biggest, most animated crowds are typically those that engage politically incorrect moral issues. I'm thinking, for example, of Glenn Loury explaining the power of faith in reducing ghetto poverty. Michael Medved talking in vividly religious terms about protecting children from what he describes as a national assault on innocence. Or the Reverend Floyd Flake describing the responsibility of churches to save poor children from inner-city public schools.

I'm also thinking of the people who have said, especially right after we opened shop in 1990, that they didn't necessarily agree with our conservative take on issues, but they hoped we would "keep talking about values."

That's encouraging, because it is my view that the hardest—which is to say, most human—problems facing our country will never get solved until enough people grab their heads and say, "My God, we're committing suicide and we simply can't do this any longer."

Mitchell B. Pearlstein is president of the Center of the American Experiment, a Minneapolis think tank.

But What About Clinton?

Robert Bork

Suggestions that we have reversed the disastrous social and cultural trends of the past 30 years and are returning to a happier state are interesting, cheery, and unpersuasive. Perhaps that will happen, perhaps we will return to the healthier climate of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, a possibility the charts on display here are apparently intended to support, but it is at least equally likely, if still worse does not lie ahead, that we will have to learn to live in the degraded moral climate that surrounds us now. The implications of the chart showing a rising percentage of Americans who identify "a letdown in moral values" as one of the "major causes of our problems today" (from 50 percent to 62 percent in 28 years) are thoroughly ambiguous. Either Americans are more moral today than they were in

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1970, which is possible, if you remember 1970, or the problems have become so much worse that public alarm is rising. In any event, the public that is alarmed is the same public that supports the worst of our popular entertainment and refuses to be "judgmental" about the behavior of others. The public's view of the damage done by dissipating morals rose simultaneously with the pathologies tracked in the other charts, which is not a cause for optimism. Alarm is not, it appears, synonymous with a determination to reform.

But what of the other charts? They show calamitous rises in pathologies followed, quite recently, by slight declines. That hardly signifies the end of the bull market in social corruption. The decades-long explosion of illegitimate births has shown a slight decline for whites and a more substantial one for blacks whose rates were much greater to begin with. Rates for both groups remain spectacularly high by historic measures. Births to teenagers seem to have declined only modestly for all groups other than blacks.

The same modest decline is shown by the overall rate of abortions. The great jump in abortion rates followed *Roe v. Wade*, which carried a moral message as well as an (unsupported) legal conclusion. Abortion rates are still far above the pre-*Roe* rate. Studies indicate that about nine-tenths of all abortions are done for reasons of personal convenience, not for reasons of health or danger to the mother's life. That in itself is a dismaying cultural indicator. While the percentage of Americans who think that abortion should be legal under *any* circumstances has dropped, it is amazing that 22 percent think so, considering that this approval extends to partial-birth abortions, a gruesome procedure, indistinguishable from infanticide, that has no medical justification.

So it goes through most of the rest of the charts: high numbers and percentages followed by very slight to quite moderate declines for such activities as recreational sex, teenage sex, divorce, number of children involved in divorce, crimes, use of illicit drugs, and adolescent suicides. Some of this is clearly misleading. Crime, for example, is expected to increase dramatically as a larger and more violent generation of young males arrives. The strong rise in per capita charitable donations is likely due more to prosperity and an exuberant economy than to any moral transformation.

The one clearly encouraging chart shows a significant decline in the welfare rolls. Perhaps, just perhaps, that decline has something to do with the recent decline in pathologies that are related to a welfare-dependent underclass. If so, those are unambiguous glad tidings.

The statistics on religiousness are surely deceptive. A great many Americans attend church, but many—probably most—of the people in the pews do not accept all of the teachings of their religion but pick and choose the more agreeable items. Few religions stress morality rather than personal comfort and therapy. There is much talk from the pulpit about God's love but little about sin. The dominant culture has invaded mainline religions so that "religiousness" does not necessarily mean improved moral behavior. There is disagreement whether traditional biblical religion is reviving, and the depth and staying power of any revival remain to be seen.

One highly significant chart is missing from this collection, however: a graph showing Bill Clinton's share of the popular vote in the 1992 and '96 elections and his approval ratings today. The American people have long known, not to put too fine a point on the matter, that Clinton is a congenital liar, a serial adulterer, and a draft dodger. Only a few decades previously any one of those characteristics would have been absolutely disqualifying. They were not in 1992 or afterward. Today his approval ratings are stratospheric despite our knowledge that in the past year he has committed perjury in legal proceedings, lied to Congress, lied to the American people, tampered with witnesses, and obstructed justice. His party stands implacably behind him, frustrating congressional inquiries and slandering the independent counsel. None of this seems to matter. The man is a felon several times over, but, such are our times, he is unlikely either to be removed from office or indicted once he leaves it. Public morality, like private morality, has been privatized.

Perhaps the President's case is an aberration, or perhaps we have always been vulnerable to demagogues but never before had one so skillful. Nevertheless, America's response to the White House scandals shows we must be wary of taking relatively slight and altogether ambiguous improvements in other matters as presaging a better, more moral tomorrow. The President's rise, after all, paralleled the rise of the other pathologies reflected in the charts. If Clinton's case is dispositive, then, the answer to the question "Has America turned a cultural corner?" is "Yes, but the wrong one."

Robert Bork is Olin Scholar in Legal Studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Return of Common Sense

Michael Barone

Yes, America is turning some corners and heading in the right direction. And for the simplest reason: People learn from experience. Political liberals have

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assumed history is a story of progressively larger government. Cultural liberals have assumed history is a story of progress from restraint to liberation ("You can't keep them down on the farm after they've seen Pa-ree"). But history proves both assumptions are false: Governments got smaller after Waterloo; Victorians had more self-restraint than Georgians. The same iron assumptions of decline are proving wrong today, as the information in this magazine shows.

The bad trends depicted have their roots in 1960s liberalism, which delegitimized restraint even as its own programs were encouraging disastrous disorder. Governmental unwisdom produced unwinnable war in Vietnam and protests at home, just as the Great Society produced riots in the streets. The healthier trends of the present have their roots in the common sense of ordinary people, who have realized a change of direction is both possible and necessary.

Start with the trends affected by government policymakers. From 1965-75, crime and welfare tripled in America as liberal elites crippled law enforcement, closed jails, and invited anyone who wanted to apply onto the welfare rolls. Now, since about 1993, crime and welfare have been declining on just as steep a curve. This is not a response to a good economy or to demographic trends: Welfare rolls were unresponsive to the economic cycle between 1975 and 1993, and the number of young males in New York City has not decreased 50 percent since 1994, as crime has.

No, the changes occurred because Americans repudiated the bogus expertise of criminologists—who claimed crime could not be controlled by police tactics or reduced by long jail terms—and of social work professors—who claimed welfare could not be reduced by workfare. Acting on common sense instead of supposed elite expertise, public officials like Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani have reduced welfare in Wisconsin 81 percent and crime in Gotham 50 percent over the past four years.

Similarly, the bogus expert predictions that government spending must always increase faster than the economy have been disproved. Americans have recognized that an ever-larger government is also ever-more inefficient and incompetent. Now, thanks to the end of the Cold War and the election of the Republican Congress in 1994, federal spending is going down as a share of the economy—and voters approve.

Next, move on to today's good trends that result from the personal decisions of ordinary people. The cultural liberals of the 1960s successfully liberated Americans from re-

An American Perestroika

Charles W. Bray, president of the Johnson Foundation and a self-described "liberal Democrat," recently argued in the Chronicle of Higher Education *that new conservative challenges to liberal orthodoxies in areas like education, philanthropy, and social policy have had good effects on the nation:*

We liberals once had fresh ideas, many of them developed in the 1930s and perfected through the 1960s. But by the 1970s and '80s, too many of these ideas had been bureaucratized, pushed beyond rational limits. Experts came to overwhelm the efforts of the poor and the afflicted to help themselves. "I'm here to help you" really meant, "I know better, and we'll do it my way"—even though this increasingly meant that we would do it in conformity with rules drawn up hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

The vision of a great society withered with experience, but we continued to pursue it—partly because liberals couldn't find an alternative. It did seem odd that the more we spent on law enforcement and welfare, the more crime and hopelessness there seemed to be. The experts told us the solution was "more"—more money for an educational system that wasn't educating, more programs even though similar programs didn't seem to be solving our problems, more experts reinforcing society's bureaucratic strictures.

And then, about 20 years ago, a countermovement began to take shape, which continues to grow. Most of us liberals overlooked it and almost all of us missed its significance at the outset. Its proponents argued for renewed emphasis on family, neighborhood, values, and character, on reducing the size of government and freeing individual and local initiative. Ideas, not programs, were its currency.

These ideas have proved powerful. And I submit that, although we do not have to accept them all, the entry of new ways of thinking into the American intellectual bloodstream after decades of liberals' monopolizing the public policy debate has been good for the country (if not for the experts who embodied, and profited from, the monopoly).

As both public opinion polls and votes in Congress and state legislatures demonstrate, Americans are thinking—and, increasingly, acting—in new ways, breaking out of the conceptual and practical ruts in which we had become stuck in recent decades, Not all of these new directions will prove fruitful. Not every individual on welfare will find and keep a job. Not every student participating in a character-education program will develop traits we can admire. Not every neighborhood will find its way to vitality and increased participation by citizens. Some charter schools will fail. But this American *perestroika* seems much more likely to succeed in reinvigorating our country than the original version did in the Soviet Union.

I believe we owe this new vigor largely to those pushy intellectual parvenus, the conservatives who, after an absence of decades from the national discourse, are back in force—challenging an encrusted and immobile conventional wisdom, arguing that top-down approaches to local problems are a contradiction in terms, reminding us that even the very poorest have unused talent and energy but no incentive to employ those talents in the previous social-welfare system. Liberal approaches to life's problems and opportunities have been challenged, shaken, turned inside out. The results will be a while in coming.

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straints by discouraging religious observance and encouraging divorce, abortion, and adolescent alcohol and drug experimentation. Americans have had a generation to live with the results, and they don't like them—especially the young people who actually grew up under a regimen where parents frequently divorced and shed moral restraints.

The declines in abortion and divorce and teenage alcohol use have been slow but steady, dating from around 1980. The 1990s have seen newer declines in the endorsement and practice of teenage sex, in adolescent suicide, in illegitimate births, as well as new increases in religiosity and teenage church attendance. Some of these changes may have been pushed along by good policies; for instance, welfare reform may have driven down illegitimate births. But more are affected by simple observation of life—Americans, especially young Americans, have seen the liberal future and decided it doesn't work.

Bogus experts still rule most of the national media, the federal bureaucracy, and much (though not all) of the Democratic party. But as on Vietnam and the Great Society, they are losing the hearts and minds of the people.

Michael Barone is senior writer at U.S. News & World Report.

The Two Americas

Daniel Lapin

It is normal for a person hearing the thunder of distant guns to want to assume it's nothing but a summer rainstorm. Superficial signs of tranquillity, however, can lull us into complacency. Perhaps these cheerful graphs camouflage America's real war.

Consider this statistical scenario: My wife, Susan, and I struggle joyfully to raise and care for our seven children. Not ten miles from us lives Helen who, like Susan, is also home with her seven offspring. Her pathetically neglected children, each fathered by a different long-forgotten boyfriend, sprawl before a blaring TV. Helen drifts in and out of drug-induced stupor. Although almost a caricature of contrasts, both Susan and Helen represent countless other women. And so a statistician might ecstatically proclaim the good news: 50 percent of women with seven children are now off welfare and at home, caring for their well-nourished children. The statistic may be accurate, but it is not the whole truth about Susan, Helen, and the children.

Many Americans still take as their ideal the biblical blueprint of one man married to one woman, both dedicated to one another and to their children. Yielding some of their individual autonomy to the responsibilities of family, the men and women in turn enjoy the benefits that family life brings and also unwittingly benefit the community. You and I are better off with God-centered, intact families as neighbors, and their sons are less likely to prey on our property or our daughters.

But many other Americans embrace the seductive vision of the individual, not the family, as the basic unit of society. This vision grants the indulgence of anonymity. It also tragically legitimizes self-destructive ways of life.

When statisticians group these two kinds of Americans together, they camouflage the sad news that we are two separate nations living out two incompatible philosophies. And so we hear that in the past ten years the number of college freshmen who think premarital sex is O.K. has dropped 10 percent. But in reality, at conventional universities the overwhelming majority of freshmen indulge in premarital sex. Just ask them; they will not be ashamed to tell you.

At the same time, on scores of other campuses around America almost none of the unmarried students engage in premarital sex. But lumping the UCLA and Princeton students with those at Brigham Young and Regent University obscures more than it reveals. It's a serious mistake to ignore the specific nature of the schools which encourage self-restraint, or to ignore the character of the families who raised those students with the necessary strength to resist.

Similarly, it sounds wonderful that crime is down since 1990. But the improvement is not evenly distributed. Most crime is still committed by young males raised without real fathers. Children raised in broken homes and provided with no religious education are vastly likelier to behave criminally than children from intact homes.

Illegitimacy? The small reductions that have taken place conceal two vital pieces of the puzzle. One is the incredibly high number of illegitimate births still afflicting our nation. Second is the fact that illegitimacy is overwhelmingly a problem of secularized America.

There are two Americas. The one deriving its model from God suffers very little illegitimacy. There are shameful and false attempts to define the two Americas in terms of race or economic level. In truth, they are separated by moral dichotomies.

Years ago, the stereotype of a vast middle-of-the-road America with a small number of doctrinal secular humanists at one end and an equally small number of "Bible thumpers" at the other, may have been accurate. Today it no longer reflects reality. Americans have migrated from the center, creating ever larger teams at either end of the tug-of-war rope.

Has America Turned A Corner?

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For decades, secular Americans had been more politically involved than religious Americans, and that brought about frightening changes in our cultural landscape during the past 30 years. Not satisfied, for instance, with a Supreme Court decision that moved abortion into the cultural mainstream, the Left insisted on using tax revenue for abortion providers, heaping scorn upon those who expressed the least whiff of disapproval.

Relentless campaigns to change our culture finally awoke the sleeping giant, however—America's Christian conservatives. It is their joining the cultural struggle today that is skewing the statistics, suggesting that we have turned a corner.

The recent election clearly demonstrates our new polarization. Candidates and issues that were clearly positioned with either the Right or the Left enjoyed an advantage. Those that exhibited weakness and lack of conviction mostly failed. Democrats were far more committed to the doctrines of the Left than Republicans were to doctrines of the Right. As a result, religious conservatives stayed home in droves.

America will only turn a corner once we recognize that two powerful ideas are competing for the country's soul. Humans have always had to choose between good and evil, between life and death. Americans who seek social salvation in secularism are not evil, but their doctrines most certainly are, having brought misery to millions. Turning a corner will require replacing harmful ideas with good ones. That is America's real war.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin is president of Toward Tradition, and author of America's Real War.

The Glass Is Still Half Empty

Allan Carlson

Let me begin with a confession: With only Swedish Lutheran grandparents, I am genetically programmed for cultural pessimism.

That is not to say there is no good news. The most encouraging comes on the issue of abortion. Twenty-five years of pro-life activism have stripped away the arguments and revealed the ugly act for what it is. In consequence, the abortion *rate* has fallen since the mid-1980s, followed by the absolute number of abortions since 1991. Only an obstinate (and, lest we forget, a largely Republican-appointed) Supreme Court stands in the way of democratic, state-by-state repeal of *Roe v. Wade.*

We can also take comfort in the decline in out-of-wedlock births and the related decline in adolescent sexual activity. For largely unexplained reasons, the illegitimacy rate for African Americans has actually been falling since the mid-1960s, even as the same rate for whites began a rapid climb. The good news is that this latter development has now ceased. Both recent welfare reforms and mounting public disapproval, I suspect, lie behind this welcome change.

There are signs that growing religious commitment among adolescents is bearing fruit. The *Journal of Marriage and the Family* recently published a startling finding: From 1982-88, the percentage of white female adolescents who were virgins fell from 51 to 42 percent. Yet among "white female adolescents who are fundamentalist Protestants," the proportion who were virgins *rose* from 45 to 61 percent! (Perhaps a laurel leaf should go to Jerry Falwell.) More recent numbers suggest this religious effect is now spreading to other areas and other denominations as well. At the same time, secular sex education programs like Project Reality are successfully driving home the abstinence message in the public schools.

Public policy is also finally giving the family its due. Tax levels are a good indicator of priorities here, because a tax cut for one part of the commonwealth means a rise in the relative tax burden of others. From 1963 through the mid-1980s, family households with children were the big losers in tax code changes; corporations, the childless, and the elderly the big winners. But more recent reforms have seen the family move to the front of the line, with some notable gains already recorded, including the recent $500 per child tax credit.

Finally, I take heart from recurring signs of American social creativity. "Home schoolers"—oddities in the 1970s and persecuted by the public school monopolists in the 1980s—are now reinventing American education and pushing toward 2 million strong. These families are more vital, their children are more moral, and the nation as a whole will benefit from their existence in countless ways.

I recently spent a brief sojourn with the *Brazos de Dios* homesteaders in central Texas. Founded 25 years ago as a Christian mission in Manhattan's legendary "Hell's Kitchen," the diverse congregants gradually discovered "home births," "home schooling," and "home gardening." Then, leaving behind their drug- and prostitute-infested neighborhood, they moved west. Today they have built a strong community based on self-reliance, traditional agriculture, and craftsmanship, filled with good families and beautiful children.

Despite all this good news, there are other trends to report which suggest that America has only achieved a deceptive stability resting on a high degree of disorder. For example, a level or slightly rising crude marriage rate masks a troubling reality: the rate of first marriage has continued to fall. This is camouflaged by a rise in second and subsequent marriages. Meanwhile, the number of "unmarried couples" surges ahead, rising nearly 10 percent just from 1995 to '96. These relationships built on "no promises" have not proven to be good "practice" mar-

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riages, as promised. They turn out to be more, rather than less, prone to divorce after being solemnized by marriage. And cohabiting couples feed into another discouraging number: The count of "nonfamily" households continues to rise, reaching 30 million in 1996 (compared to only 6 million in 1960).

Every social analyst has his or her favorite statistic. Mine is the "marital fertility rate," or number of births per 1,000 married, fertile women. This statistic captures the effect of three important decisions at once: (1) the willingness of adults to commit to each other in marriage; (2) their decision in any given year to forego divorce; and (3) their readiness to bring another child into the world, rather than spend time, energy, and money some other way. When this number swings up, families are growing stronger. When it goes down, the family is in decline, and the social order with it.

Unfortunately, the last sustained rise in marital fertility occurred in the mid-1950s. Since then, the line has mostly edged down. So I celebrate all the signs of social renewal and family reconstruction depicted in these pages. These things are real and full of promise, and I will seek to defend them politically against the ACLU, NEA, NOW, PPFA and all the other lettered groups that prefer a post-family social order. But I will also keep my champagne on ice. Until the marital fertility rate begins to climb, the glass must still be half empty.

Allan Carlson is president of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society in Rockford, Illinois.

Get Washington Out of the Way

John Ashcroft

Our country is striving mightily to heal itself from a generation of cultural depredation. Recent years have seen some improvement, as the data collected here show—but that improvement has sometimes only entailed a change from the ruinous to the merely horrifying.

Let's look at the stories behind some of the figures. While we may have slowed the growth of government, we have not yet been able to cut back its size. Federal spending is down as a percentage of GDP, but the total amount is over $1.7 trillion, an all-time high. While we have eliminated the deficit, our debt remains over $5.5 trillion, and interest payments on that debt are over $200 billion a year. Just this fall, Congress passed a $500 billion omnibus spending bill that busted the 1997 budget caps with $21 billion in phony "emergency" spending.

On the personal level, serious cultural trauma remains. The number of abortions—1.2 million in 1995—remains unconscionably high, as is the number of homicides—19,645 in 1996. While the reduction of a thousand homicides is a good trend, we must remember that every single homicide is a tragedy.

It is our solemn obligation to change the culture that produces these staggering figures. We deserve leadership that inspires us as a nation, that redefines the possible, that calls America to her highest and best and is not satisfied with our lowest and least.

Most of the progress we have made up to now has come in spite of—not because of—the federal government. This nation will not truly turn a corner until the federal government stops standing in the way of progress. On the issue of drugs, for example, President Clinton supported free needle distribution for drug addicts in the District of Columbia, a policy that gives in to drug addiction and appeals to the lowest. I successfully fought this, but there are many other examples where the actions of the federal government worsen our cultural problems rather than improving them.

One of the biggest obstacles the federal government places in the way of a cultural renaissance is taxes. Washington takes more money from Americans than at any point in our history. In the past five years, individual income taxes have grown by nearly 50 percent. This year the average taxpayer had to work until May 10 just to pay the cost of government. Worse, our tax system attacks work, marriage, and savings.

We could change this by switching to a fair flat tax with just two rates, 10 and 25 percent. This massive tax simplification and cut would do much to relieve the burdens the federal government places on America's families. Cutting taxes will also help reduce federal spending, which eats up almost 40 percent of our gross domestic product.

But let us not ignore the good news in our culture. This year, my constituent Mark McGwire hit 70 home runs. The first thing he did after breaking an "unbreakable" record was to hug his ten-year-old son, the future. Then, embracing the past, he went and hugged the family of the previous record-holder, Roger Maris. Contrast the government's role in this drama: The IRS said that a fan who generously turned in one of the record-breaking home-run balls would have to pay a large gift tax. Only public outrage forced the agency to reverse course.

McGwire and Sammy Sosa (who also broke the home run record this season) are inspirations to Americans ready to fix the problems, not fix the blame. It is time for the federal government to step out of the way and let the great American revival move forward at a faster ppace.

John Ashcroft is a Republican Senator from Missouri.

Has America Turned A Corner?

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Freedom Works

Ben Wattenberg

As ever in the course of human affairs, Murphy is in the saddle, brandishing his Law as a lance: "If it can go wrong, it will go wrong, at the worst possible time," reads his flag, waving in the wind.

I have recently been researching a project entitled "The First Measured Century," which will retell America's twentieth-century history using social data instead of social anecdotes. (Anecdotes tell you about Lindbergh; data tell you about air transportation.)

The century-long data portrait of America shows that Murphy is a frequent visitor to our shores. Obviously, the Great Depression was a big-time murphy. World War I was worse; World War II was catastrophic. But there were other murphies, call them muddled murphies, where things *both* went wrong and went right.

What we now call "The '60s" served up that sort of a muddled murphy. There was plenty of good stuff, including civil rights, civil liberties, equality for women, environmental progress. But by my lights, all of these things went too far. There was also plenty of unvarnished bad stuff produced in the '60s, including crime, illegitimacy, drugs, and welfare.

Has America turned the corner on some of these recent down trends? Well, yes, we have. We're very good at that. "Mid-course correction" is emblazoned on our family shield.

For example, in the '60s, the feminist pioneer Gloria Steinem used to say, "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle." But in the decades since the '60s we have learned that a woman, with children, without a man is the central social and economic problem in an advanced democracy.

Consider some of the effects of families without fathers, particularly when the female-headedness arises from teenage out-of-wedlock birth: Much of today's vaunted rise in "income inequality," for instance, is linked to the rise in female-headed households. The increase in female-headed households is a major cause of crime. The increase in female-headed households is, by definition, a pre-condition for a rise in welfare.

Have we turned a corner on this matter? The most encouraging data I have seen in recent years concerns teenage black fertility. From 1991-97 that rate has dropped by 23 percent. There are technical reasons why that stunning change has not yet translated into the more commonly cited *ratio* of illegitimacy, but, trust me, it will. (And for the first time ever, the average number of lifetime children born to black women is now roughly the same as the national rate.)

Why is this happening? Young women have seen from the examples of their older sisters, or mothers, that Gloria Steinem didn't know much about women, men, fish, bicycles, or economics. They have seen that a woman without a man is usually poor.

And welfare has been reformed. The American polity said we're fed up and we're not going to take it anymore. In 1994 I was traumatized on this issue in Kansas City, Missouri, while interviewing "welfare moms" and "deadbeat dads." They hated the welfare system, to the point where an ex-convict told me Rush Limbaugh made a good deal of sense on that issue. No wonder six out of ten current or past welfare recipients were telling pollsters at the time of reform that welfare was doing more harm than good.

Reforming welfare took a while. In the mid- to late '80s, a number of governors began asking for federal "waivers" to change their state programs, typically in ways that would reward work over dependency. The New Jersey reform included a "family cap," which denied extra payments for any additional out-of-wedlock births. First under President Bush and then under Clinton, the increase in waivers reached flood-tide. By summer 1996, when federal welfare reform was finally passed, 43 states already had some form of welfare waiver on the books. It was a process, not an event. Now the number of welfare recipients has declined dramatically.

The response to the crime wave also took a while. Alas, the only proven way to reduce crime seems to be incarceration. (A thug in prison cannot mug your sister.) In the beginning, as crime rates went up, incarceration rates kept coming down, adding momentum to the wave of violent criminality. But by the early '70s the message was received. In 1970 there were 200,000 Americans in prison. By 1996, the number was 1.2 million. With so many bad guys in prison, the violent crime rate began to tumble. (And no, the additional prisoners are not "non-violent" folks rounded up for using drugs; 94 percent of inmates are in for either violent or repeat offenses.)

So, we've turned the corner. But Murphy hasn't gone away. He never does, the rat. During summer 1998, it looked as if we were in for a global recession. As this is written, things look better.

No matter. Murphy will be back. And we'll deal with him here in America more quickly than in most any other place. Open, free, and flexible societies are able to respond that way—openly, freely, and flexibly.

Ben Wattenberg is a senior research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

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WELFARE REFORM IS WORKING

FOR THE POOR AND TAXPAYERS BOTH

By Ron Haskins

As I drove up Interstate 5 from San Diego to Long Beach, I thought back over 20-plus years of visiting welfare offices. Drab operations they were—interviewing moms, filling out 20-page forms, seeking verification of assets and income, calculating benefit amounts, all to spit out the grand product: government checks.

Since the passage of welfare reform in 1996, reports have suggested that a lot is changing in the way states administer welfare. But nothing prepared me for what I was about to witness.

As I pulled into the parking lot of the Regional Work Center in Long Beach, I was greeted by a young man in a blue blazer who ushered me into a large room with 15 people. For the next two hours, I heard a lot about jobs, training, wages, transportation, and child care. But nothing, absolutely nothing, about benefit levels or check writing.

The most striking thing about the meeting was the participants. In addition to the welfare administrators and recipients—standard fare for such meetings—we were joined by the president of Franklin Brass, an assembly and packaging company with about 400 employees; a regional personnel manager for United Airlines; the director of development for Delco Machine and Gear, a small machine company with about 90 employees; and the chief hiring agent for the Volt Company, a temporary employment agency. All were on a first-name basis with the administrator who ran the work program, Frank Mora. Each of the employers told me about their involvement with the program and then introduced one of the former welfare recipients they had hired. The work program administrators jumped in occasionally to explain various details of coordination or to propound their work-first philosophy.

Here's a typical story. Jim was a 19-year-old with two children, a wife, no job, and little education. When he and his wife applied for welfare benefits, Mora gave him an appointment to help him find a job. After Jim missed the appointment, Mora went to his apartment to find out why. Jim lived in a gang-infested neighborhood and had stayed home with a sick child. Mora gave him another appointment, worked with Jim and the local housing authority to find him a better apartment in a better neighborhood, and got him an interview with Delco. After several months on the job, the company was so impressed with Jim they offered to help pay for extensive training as a machine operator. When he finishes the training, Jim will be earning over $15 per hour with benefits.

Under the old welfare regime, education and training programs for welfare recipients were often used by administrators as diversionary tactics to avoid actual work. By contrast, consider this example of training under the new regime: In his conversations with employers and his reading of want ads, Mora noticed lots of local demand for forklift operators. So he worked with officials at Long Beach City College to design a four-day course in forklift operation. In the first year, about 1,200 adults applying for or receiving welfare completed the course. Mora reports that 90 percent of them are now employed operating forklifts and earning at least $8 per hour with benefits.

My discussion with Bill Allen of United Airlines was equally revealing. He told me that if United places a newspaper ad, about half the people they hire from the ad will be gone within a year. But if they hire welfare participants through the

Photography by Gavin McLeman/Roland Group

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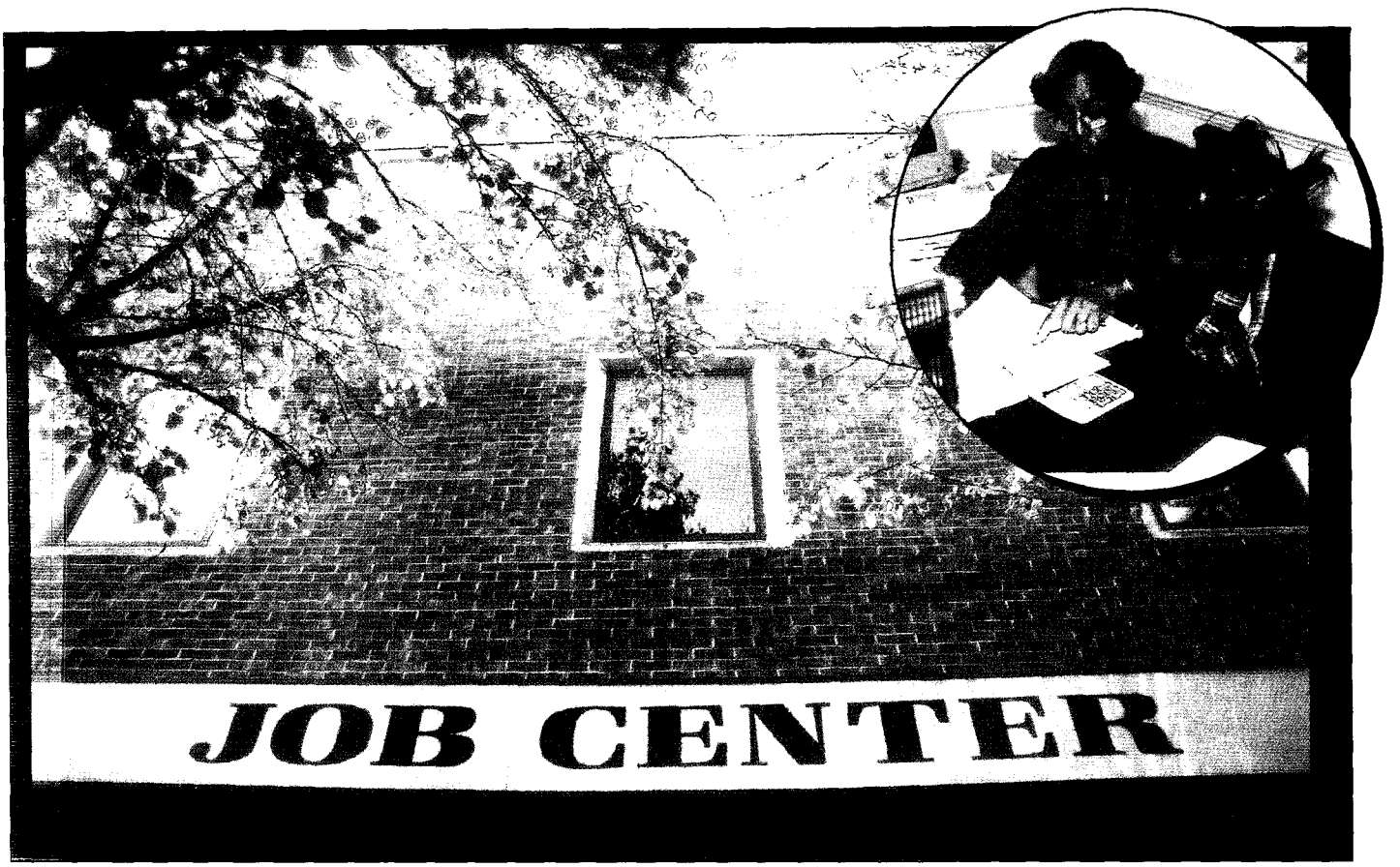

THE FIRST THING YOU SEE ON THE WALL OF THE ANNAPOLIS OFFICE ARE THE WORDS "JOB CENTER"—"WELFARE" IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND. IN A TYPICAL MONTH, 1,700 "CUSTOMERS" WALK INTO THE JOB CENTER. FEWER THAN 100 (6 PERCENT) WILL WIND UP ON CASH WELFARE.

Long Beach office, attrition is cut in half. Given the investment United makes in their employees, cutting attrition saves lots of money. Doubting adults on welfare would be more reliable employees than adults who respond to ads, I asked Allen if he could explain the difference in attrition rates. After considerable discussion it became clear that Mora didn't send just any welfare recipient to United Airlines; he sent only qualified recipients who had good records. In other words, the welfare office was screening people for jobs. The least qualified often started with the temporary employment agency; the best qualified were sent to United and other high-wage employers.

Like the Long Beach office, welfare offices all over Los Angeles County are transforming themselves into job-placement centers. The result is that welfare rolls are dropping precipitously. Over a 10-month period between 1997-98, the rolls in Los Angeles dropped more than 100,000, saving the state $54 million each month. Counties in the rest of California, including those with double-digit unemployment, report similar declines. According to the state's principal economist, it's "the only extended caseload reduction we have ever had."

Ron Haskins is the staff director of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee.

Switch coasts. We are now headed to the Anne Arundel County Job Center in Annapolis, Maryland, accompanied by a small delegation of British visitors intent on learning about American welfare reform. The British delegation is headed by Keith Bradley, Undersecretary for Social Welfare in the House of Commons.

We're visiting a program run by Democrats in a state controlled by Democrats, which is nice if you're a member of the British Labour party. Surely here we will find the old entitlement mentality and hostility toward the idea of replacing welfare with work.

On the way to the conference room, however, we pass walls decorated with posters touting the benefits of work and press accounts of former welfare mothers who've left welfare for jobs. As potential welfare dependents talk with job counselors in this converted bank building, a quiet efficiency pervades the place.

In the course of an hour's discussion, we hear more or less the same things the program managers said in Long Beach. Again, no talk about benefits; instead, all the talk is about job placements, child care, transportation, training. The enthusiasm in this office is electric. The attitude of the staff is, We should have been doing this all along.

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And what "this" is can be stated simply: helping welfare applicants get a job before they get welfare. The first thing you see on the wall of the Annapolis office are the words "Job Center"—"welfare" is nowhere to be found. And they're not kidding. In a typical month, 1,700 "customers" walk into the Job Center. Fewer than 100 (6 percent) will wind up on cash welfare. The rest are diverted, mostly to employment.

Before the customers can even ask for cash welfare, they are interviewed by a job counselor who believes they can and should work. Then they are helped to prepare a résumé on the Center's public computer, assisted in arranging job interviews (using the phone bank available in the Job Center), provided with on-site child care if necessary, told about available education and training courses (which are not allowed to interfere with getting a job), and signed up for child support. The Job Center even has clothes available so the customers can dress properly for interviews. And if the customer has a transportation problem in this rural county with little public transportation, the job counselor is likely to sign her up for the lease-to-purchase plan for discarded county vehicles.

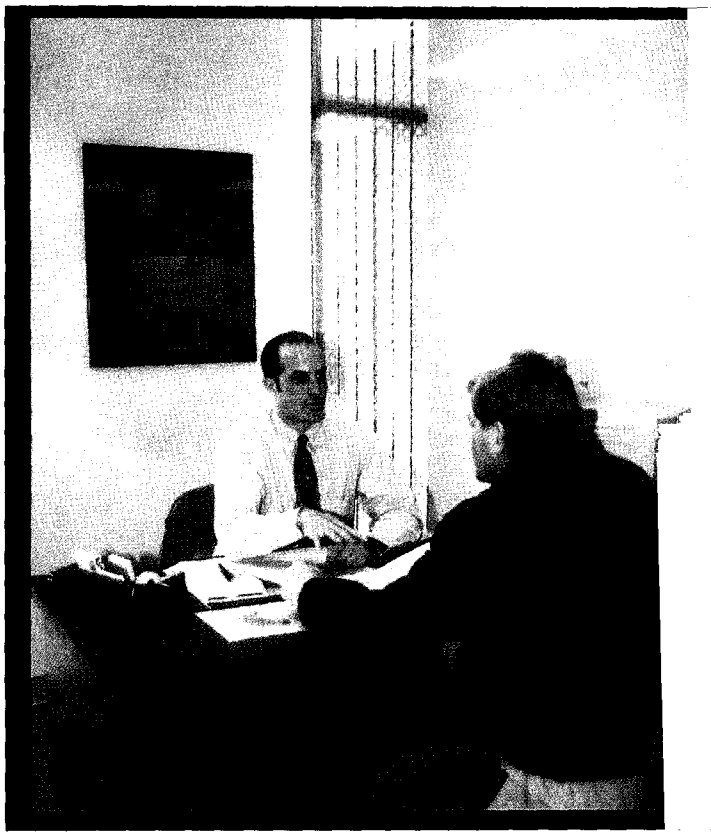
As in Los Angeles, data on the Annapolis program are clear and consistent. That only 6 percent of the adults who come into the Job Center in a typical month wind up on welfare indicates that this is a completely new kind of "welfare" program. And even among those who actually apply for welfare, only half receive cash benefits before they get a job.

Here are two more striking statistics. In October 1996, when the program started, the county spent $830,000 per month on cash welfare. A year later, the county spent $680,000, a 20 percent reduction. When the county started the Job Center, 9,100 families drew cash welfare. A year later the rolls had plummeted by 40 percent.

Welfare declines like these are completely without historical precedent—but nowadays they are routine. The national rolls have shrunk by an astonishing 40 percent since their peak in March 1994. The highest previous decline in cash welfare rolls over any period of two or more years was 8 percent.

Lest anyone conclude that the current economic boom explains the decline, consider the Reagan expansion that began in 1982. As the economy added 17 million jobs over eight years, the welfare caseload actually increased by 13 percent. Even during the first three years of the current expansion, the welfare caseload expanded even as national employment grew. It was not until 1994, with the states implementing their own partial welfare reforms under Reagan-Bush waivers from federal rules, that the welfare caseload began to decline. Then, after the Republican Congress passed federal reform in 1996, caseloads plummeted. They are now dropping at the rate of nearly 6,000 recipients per day.

Caseload declines are an important indicator of success because they are an indirect measure of welfare families achieving self-reliance. But female employment and earnings are even more important indicators of success, and evidence is accumulating that welfare reform has had major effects on both. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that after cruising along at



Jason Grove works with an applicant at the Annapolis Job Center.

about 136,000 per year, the net increase in single-mothers with jobs rose to 272,000, a figure higher than ever before, in the 12-month period ending in October 1996—just as the states were implementing reforms on a limited basis. Over the next 12 months, after every state had implemented the federal welfare reform law, the figure exploded to 456,000.

As reform began to drive welfare rolls down, the rate of employment among never-married, separated, and divorced mothers with children—precisely the mothers most likely to be on welfare—rose significantly, according to recent studies. John Bishop of Cornell, for example, reports that the percentage of never-married mothers holding jobs jumped an unprecedented 32 percent from 1994-98. By contrast, the rate of work among these mothers had been virtually flat for the previous 15 years. Over this same four-year period (a time of labor shortages in much of the country), fully two-thirds of all increases in U.S. workforce participation were attributable to welfare reform and increases in the federal tax credit for low-income workers.

There is also evidence, from New Jersey and elsewhere, that welfare reforms have helped reduce out-of-wedlock births among welfare mothers. If a better work ethic among unmarried mothers is now combining with reduced illegitimacy, leaving fewer children to grow up without a father in the first place, then some truly profound improvements in American social life will follow. And there are indications this is beginning to happen (see page 38).

The dramatic decline in welfare rolls has *not* produced the increase in poverty that was widely predicted by opponents of welfare reform. In 1997, the Census Bureau has

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THE NATIONAL WELFARE ROLLS HAVE SHRUNK BY AN ASTONISHING 40 PERCENT.

THE HIGHEST PREVIOUS DECLINE OVER ANY PERIOD OF TWO OR MORE YEARS WAS 8 PERCENT.

just reported, children's poverty declined for the fourth year in a row, and the rate for black children declined by the largest single-year amount ever, to the lowest rate on record in the U.S. The poverty rate for black female-headed families with children declined by a remarkable 4.1 percentage points, also by far the greatest decline ever.

Liberal opponents of welfare reform predicted that mothers pushed from public assistance to low-wage jobs would experience substantial declines in their incomes as a result. Now that lots of mothers have made the move, what does the evidence show? An analysis prepared recently by the Clinton administration's Office of Management and Budget finds that single mothers living in the poorest 40 percent of U.S. households received a total of $4 billion less in welfare income in 1997 than in 1993 (after taking inflation into account). But their *earned* income increased by $4.3 billion, and they also received another $2.1 billion increase from the earned income tax credit. Adding up all their sources of income, the nation's poorest mothers had nearly $3.8 billion more in 1997 than 1993. So much for income declines. More importantly, they made their money the old-fashioned way. Next thing you know, they'll be investing.

So while welfare rolls were plummeting, the employment rates of female-headed families soared, their poverty rates dropped, and their income increased. At the same time, the national illegitimacy trends reversed. This happy portrait, based on highly reliable national data, has no precedent in U.S. social history.

Given the modest success or outright failure of most social reforms attempted by government, what accounts for the impressive success of welfare reform? In the next several years, we will be treated to torturous explanations from social scientists. The real answer, though, is quite simple: As long as welfare was an entitlement, with opinion leaders and social workers telling people they had an inalienable right to unlimited benefits, more and more people signed up and stayed for longer and longer spells. By the mid-1980s, the average duration on welfare for families on the rolls at a given moment was an amazing 13 years. In short, millions of young mothers were victims of what psychologists call "learned helplessness."

But then reformers in Congress, joined by the Clinton administration, pushed through a tough set of changes designed to end welfare as a vocation. The essence of their plan was, first, to require persons on welfare to work, beginning the first day they walk through the door seeking benefits. Social workers trying to wrap cocoons of entitlements around able-bodied young Americans had to be converted into social workers who would tell applicants they should, can, and must provide for themselves. Second, firm time limits were placed on benefits, to signal that welfare is an aberration and self-reliance normal. Third, states were given authority to impose sanctions, including the cessation of all cash benefits, on adults not willing to work. Finally, federal entitlements that blindly paid money directly to individuals were converted into block grants to state governments set at a fixed amount. This change gave state and local governments a financial incentive to help people get off welfare. Under the old entitlement system, if states reduced their caseloads, the federal government "rewarded" them by cutting their federal dollars. Now, if states reduce their caseloads, they retain all the savings.

Although liberals in Congress, academia, and the media rarely said so explicitly, they assumed that adults on welfare were incapable of supporting themselves and therefore needed a protective blanket of federal entitlements. Studies will soon provide more detail on why people are leaving welfare at today's unprecedented rates, but we already know enough to conclude that the majority leave because they find work, and most of the rest either were already working or have other means of support. Welfare reformers were correct to predict that most welfare recipients could provide for themselves and their children.

The confidence reformers placed in state and local governments is also paying off. Instead of the slashed benefits and "race to the bottom" predicted by opponents of reform, states are mounting scores of innovative programs. Virtually every state now has offices like those in Long Beach and Annapolis that help low-income families make the transition from welfare to work—or avoid welfare altogether. And states are using the money they save from reduced caseloads to pay for work-promoting services such as child care and transportation, helping former recipients keep their jobs and, in some cases, get the education and training they need for better jobs.

It needs to be remembered that many of the mothers avoiding welfare today receive public subsidies of $5,000 or more even after they leave welfare (providing medical, food, or child care benefits, for instance). Critics may object to these benefits as little more than welfare by a different name. But most Americans believe it is better for adults to be productively employed than idle and dependent, and adults who can command only low wages will not leave welfare until they can actually support themselves and their children.

Starting in the 1980s, Democrats and Republicans began developing a system of non-cash benefits, contingent on work, that makes low-wage jobs economically attractive for mothers with children. Once this system was in place, the 1996 welfare reforms forced welfare-dependent mothers into self-reliance—and the pleasant discovery that they had more money and benefits (not to mention a better feeling about themselves and their place in society) when they were working, even in low-wage jobs.

The nation is now well along in creating a balanced system of public benefits that combines carrots and sticks. This success is producing a social revolution whose beneficial effects on American society are just beginning to emerge. If the nation holds steady on this course—and especially if Congress expands the new requirements to other welfare and unemployment programs—low-skilled parents, their children, and American taxpayers will all be better off.

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Welcome to the Casbah

By Joel Kotkin

Meet some immigrants well-suited to America's new economy

Victor Sawan is the perfect man for a rapidly changing and unpredictable economy. Brought up amidst the chaos of Beirut, he later emigrated to Brazil, another land not noted for its stability. Two decades ago he came to Los Angeles, seeking his fortune in what may be America's most baffling metropolis.

"Having lived in three different countries, I've been opened up to every kind of experience," the 50-year-old entrepreneur said in a modest office above his Wesley-Allen furniture factory in South Los Angeles. "I grew up in Lebanon where there is a very entrepreneurial culture. In Brazil, I learned humility."

Sawan also learned something about humility in America. He started off in the furniture business sweeping floors, later graduating to the assembly line. Far from either of his native cultures, he soon learned English and Spanish to supplement his Arabic and Portuguese. He also discovered how to sell metal bed frames, eventually forming a partnership with Martin Bender, the Jewish American who founded the company two decades ago. Today the firm employs some 100 workers in Los Angeles, owns a factory in Mexico, and sells a line of over 100 frames, many of them designed by Sawan himself.

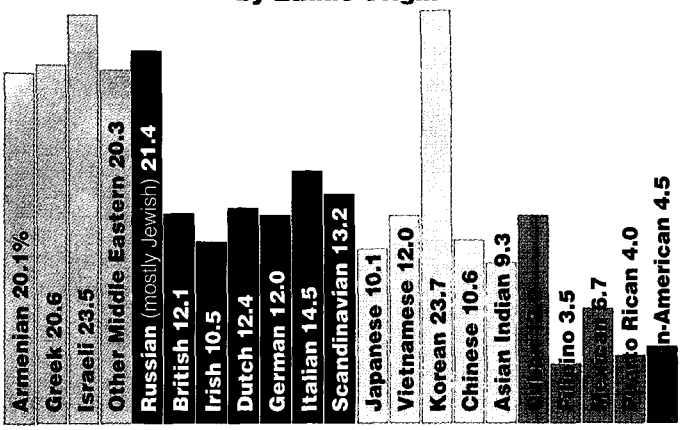
People always say, "you foreigners work too hard," Sawan observes, as he walks the company's sprawling factory floor. "But a foreigner like me comes here to work. When you're an outsider, you try harder. And the more you try, the better the chance you'll succeed."

The Super-Immigrants

With his feet now firmly planted in three cultures—Arab, Latin, and American—Sawan epitomizes what may be the ethnic cutting edge of American entrepreneurialism. In a complex economy where a willingness to change, to turn on a dime, to relate to varied groups of people is becoming critical, Americans from the chaotic crossroads of the Middle East have shown great proclivity for starting businesses, particularly in the inner city.

Veterans of the Casbah trading culture, Middle Easterners seem to adapt quickly to the general disorder and bureaucratic roadblocks in the typical urban economy. Functioning amidst the multi-ethnic cacophony—and occasional corruption—of Los Angeles, New York, or Houston does not bother people whose entrepreneurial culture was shaped in historically polyglot Old World cities like Beirut, Teheran, Jerusalem, Cairo, or Damascus.

Self-employment Rates of Americans by Ethnic Origin



Note: Figures are 1990 data for male workers. **Source:** *Journal of Human Resources*, September 1996.

Indeed, people of Middle Eastern descent have the highest rates of entrepreneurialism in America—above even groups like the Chinese and Cubans who are more often hailed for their entrepreneurial accomplishments. In a 1996 study published in the *Journal of Human Resources*, Americans of Middle Eastern descent—a mix of Christians, Muslims, and Jews—exhibited a rate of self-employment better than twice the national average. Among the many ethnic groups surveyed, only Korean Americans and Russians (most of them Jews) had comparable rates.

In another study of the ethnic cauldron of greater Los Angeles, demographers James Allen and Eugene Turner found that Americans of Israeli, Iranian, Lebanese, and Armenian heritage had the highest rates of entrepreneurialism. Only Taiwanese, Koreans, and Russians were comparable.

These entrepreneurial patterns are likely to produce eventual economic consequences well out of proportion to the size of the groups in question. Together, Middle Easterners in Los Angeles constitute about 300,000 to 400,000 souls—the numbers are as unreliable as prices at a Jerusalem *souk*. This is a modest population in a metro area of 15 million, yet their influence is felt powerfully across a series of industries—from the thriving garment, jewelry, and textile businesses located near downtown to diverse manufacturers, retailers, and distributors spread throughout the regional economy.

Many Middle Easterners admit that, at their core, they are driven by insecurity—a sense that no business or legal contract is an adequate safeguard. Kharchig Darakjian, an Armenian

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businessman, has seen his family lose fortunes both in the Middle East and later in Ethiopia. "In business we Armenians have always had to be so much faster than others because we always ended up losing what we had," explains Darakjian, who now runs a software firm with offices in Russia, the United States, Armenia, and France. "A man like me knows how to lose and lose honestly. Money goes and comes; for an Armenian, it's like knowing your name."

Ethnic Succession in American Cities

The current economic upsurge of immigrants from the Casbah follows an old motif in American economic history. From the beginnings of our nation, certain ethnic groups have had commercial influence well beyond their numbers. Historical circumstances, religious culture, work traditions, and differing proclivities and skills among various American immigrant groups have produced vastly different economic effects.

This was first seen even before the American Revolution, when Quakers and other dissenters were unusually important in laying down our earliest commercial infrastructure. As they settled in the colonies, particularly around Boston and Philadelphia, these God-fearing people prized education, thrift, and enterprise to a degree unmatched by other new arrivals. By the early nineteenth century, dissenters dominated the country's trading economy, and in the ensuing decades they drove the first stages of industrial development as well.

The most important of these early innovators were British Quakers like Samuel Slater, who brought with him the technology for the construction of the nation's first textile mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Working through Quaker and family networks, Slater ultimately built a strong financial interest in ten mills, employing more than 1,000 people across New England.

Ethnic specialization of this sort continued across the nineteenth century and into the modern era. German mechanics and engineers, arriving largely in the late 1840s and 1850s, played a preeminent role in developing the first foundries and factories across the upper-Midwest. Chinese and Japanese farmers, operating in a hostile social climate, were the first to develop the vegetable operations and fruit orchards that would make California the world's leading grower of premium crops. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jews from Eastern Europe brought the small business skills that launched the New York garment industry. Barely 10 percent of Poland's turn-of-the-century population, Jews made up 40 percent of her shoemakers and 80 percent of her tailors.

In New York, Eastern European Jews often entered fields like garment manufacturing by pooling resources from several different families. Hours were long, conditions often brutal, and competition enormous. But by the 1920s these newcomers controlled between 50 and 80 percent of all the hatmakers, furriers, tailoring shops, and garment-makers in the nation. They achieved a dominance over the American clothing industry that lasted until the arrival of the Sephardim and Asians in the last ten years.

Some academics have written that "the Jews were fortunate to arrive just as the garment industry was about to develop," economist Thomas Sowell notes. Sowell observes that "I could not help but think that Hank Aaron was similarly fortunate—that he often came to bat when a home run was about to be hit."

Built for Business

The truth is, some specific ethnic characteristics conditioned the Jews' success, and much the same is true of today's entrepreneurial Middle Eastern immigrants. Shaped by an ethnic consciousness similar to that of the Jews of yesteryear, new immigrants are sweeping into the garment industry. In New York, for example, Chinese, Indians, and Syrian Jews are replacing earlier practitioners of the business. The whole New York blue jeans industry, including brands like Jordache and Gitano, has been dominated by Syrian Jews, a tiny group whose trading culture goes back at least two millennia.

"The [European] Jews don't have the balls—they're not gutsy and they don't want to put in the bucks," observes Doreen German, a New York designer who has worked closely with Indian, Israeli, and North African manufacturers. "Their parents want them to be professionals. The Asians have the stick-to-itiveness to fight in this manufacturing business. That's why down the line it will be all Indians, Orientals, and the Sephardic Jews."

Many of these entrepreneurs, like furniture maker Victor Sawan, bring with them experiences not only from their original homelands, but from other points of their ethnic diaspora. Many of the leading figures in the Middle Eastern garment community sojourned in France before settling in New York or Los Angeles. At each step along the way, these entrepreneurs acquired cultural attributes—marketplace instincts from home, fashion sense from France, an appreciation of rational management in America—that create a kind of well-rounded business outlook that few others, native-born or foreign, can hope to match.

"Tunisians and Moroccans came to France and got exposed to a culture that has a great sense of taste," says Orly Dehan, president of Tag Rags, a fast-growing sportswear firm based in Los Angeles. "When you're an immigrant and not a scholar, without much money, all you have in your favor is your good taste."

Dehan points out, with considerable pride, that many of the rising stars of his region's clothing business—Guess, Bissou-Bissou, Jonathan Martin, Tag Rags, BCBG—have been launched by Middle Eastern entrepreneurs. Many of them share complex, and often trying, backgrounds of multiple migrations. Uri Harkham, founder of Jonathan Martin, for example, comes from a distinguished Baghdad Jewish family which traces its roots to the Babylonian Captivity following the destruction of the First Temple. "We had a good life there," Harkham recalls in his large office overlooking Los Angeles's sprawled garment district. "We were strong and educated. We were the doctors, the merchants. We worked well with the Turks, the British, and the old monarchy."

In 1951, as anti-Jewish sentiment grew following the establishment of the state of Israel, the Harkhams reluctantly left their ancestral home. It was a wrenching change for a proud people; an ancient flourishing community of over 400,000 was suddenly reduced to barely 1,000. In Israel, the Harkhams, like many Sephardim, found themselves second class citizens, living in tents without running water or electricity, lorded-over by the often arrogant, socialist-minded Ashkenazic Israeli elite.

By his sixteenth birthday, Harkham had had enough and moved to Australia, a place with a Mediterranean climate and a freer, less politicized culture than Israel's. Within a decade he and his brother, David, had built a successful clothing business. In 1975, he moved to California, where he continued to develop

Joel Kotkin is a senior fellow at the Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy and research fellow at the Reason Public Policy Institute.

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his concept of "soft clothing"—easy-to-wear fashions that appeal to people living in temperate climates.

Today Harkham employs 200 people in his modern factory just a two-minute ride from the downtown Apparel Mart. He believes the traumas and trading traditions experienced by Middle Easterners have made them tougher business competitors than virtually any other group in society. "At the end of the day, the Middle Easterners are all traders at heart—Arab, Jew, Persian, Christian—it doesn't matter," suggests Harkham, whose annual sales run over $100 million. "We have the ambition and the drive others don't. The fashion business is so fast you have to be willing to be a gambler, and live on the edge."

This same pattern has been, if anything, even clearer in the textile industry, where over 120 Iranian companies alone have helped drive the sales of L.A. textile firms from $300 million in 1982 to an estimated $20 billion today. Along with Koreans, Iranians have grown to dominate the business in less than two decades. While the ubiquitous Koreans dominate the small-scale sewing shops and wholesalers, Middle Easterners concentrate more on the higher end of the business, selling fabrics to fashion-conscious firms like Jonathan Martin.

"Textiles is one of the world's oldest industries, and we've been at it for most of that time," explains "Goody" Haydarzadeh, a one-time textile entrepreneur and now a consultant to several Iranian-run companies. "Along with the Koreans we have virtually created the whole industry here. It's in our blood."

Haydarzadeh, a Muslim, credits Middle Eastern immigrants—including real estate developers—with transforming Los Angeles into a kind of apparel bazaar, packed with low-cost wholesale shops, open-air markets, and specialized businesses selling everything from buttons to sewing machines. The district, just south and east of the corporate high-rises near the civic center, is also home to numerous Israeli, Persian, and North African restaurants—most of whom do much of their business delivering to their perpetually harried customers.

"Being a Persian or Iraqi isn't a nationality," jokes Jonathan Martin's Harkham. "It's an affliction."

Masters of Cross-cultural Trade

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the opportunism of today's Middle Eastern immigrants than their willingness to do business where most native-born Americans—and many immigrants—would fear to tread. Chaldean Arabs predominate among small shopkeepers in Detroit. Palestinian Christians own an estimated 600 of such stores in other American inner cities. Armenians and Greeks are renowned for dominating coffee shops, groceries, and specialty retail stores in areas ranging from Southern California to the Boston suburbs.

In most of these areas Levantines are a small minority, forced to rely on other groups for employees and customers. Yet as outsiders used to unusual stress and strain, they seem remarkably able to find opportunities in communities ignored by mainstream business. Take the Pico-Union district just west of downtown Los Angeles. Once a fashionable neighborhood, as evidenced by its large Victorian homes, the community of roughly 120,000 now stands as one of Los Angeles's poorest and most neglected areas.

Largely a place for new arrivals—nearly half the 1990 population had arrived from overseas within the previous ten years—local incomes are roughly half the citywide norm, and the poverty rate of 35 percent is twice the city average. Amidst the often derelict remains of elegant houses, residents endure some of the most crowded housing conditions this side of the Hudson River, with densities six times the citywide average. The area is also home to one of L.A.'s most vicious criminal organizations, the 18th Street gang.

Yet these dangers seemed mild enough for two Israeli brothers, Jerry and Ron Azarkman. After seeing many of their friends die in the Yom Kippur War, the two brothers left the Promised Land for what, to them, seemed a safer clime. Not knowing much about L.A., they started selling electronics gadgets—the business they had pursued back in Israel—door-to-door in Pico-Union.

"I didn't know English or Spanish," Jerry remembers in his offices at the corner of Olympic Boulevard and Union. "But I felt very comfortable with Spanish people because they were immigrants, too. They were welcoming and warm."

Being from the "Holy Land," Azarkman says, was a big help with many of Pico Union's devoutly Christian residents. Slowly, they built a major retail operation, offering credit—much like some of the earliest nineteenth-century Jewish Los Angeles merchants—to Latinos who could not get any from mainstream corporate businesses. By the early 1990s their company, La Curacao, had become one of the largest retailers in the district.

Not that it was easy. In the '92 riots, which devastated much of Pico-Union, La Curacao burned to the ground, along with millions of dollars worth of merchandise. Azarkman considered pulling out, but decided instead to rebuild. "One thing that swayed us," Azarkman says, "is that we couldn't leave our employees."

So instead of retreating, the Israeli businessmen advanced, eventually purchasing two office towers on Olympic, placing a large Curacao showroom on the bottom floor, and then opening a second facility in heavily Hispanic Panorama City. Today the two stores have over 100,000 customers carrying their charge cards, and they enjoy some of the highest sales levels per square foot in Southern California.

But the Azarkman's dreams for Pico-Union extend beyond Curacao. With their Olympic towers as their base, they dream of turning the area into something of a "Little Central America," along the lines of the adjacent "Koreatown" section. In this effort, they have enlisted many Central American consulates, lawyers, and business groups.

This willingness to see in Pico Union not just a collection of poor people but an economic opportunity reflects the unusual role Middle Easterners play in cities like Los Angeles. Having seen how bad things can get, and perpetual outsiders themselves, they have developed an uncanny ability to see opportunity in ways rarely exhibited by native-born Americans.

"People say I should move to Mexico, but I didn't immigrate to Mexico, I immigrated to America," insists Victor Sawan, as he watches workers assembling metal frames. "These are my people working here. I play soccer with them. They have built this company. The people who run away to Mexico or Idaho, they are the ones who don't see the opportunities. These people have ambition. That's what makes it beautiful—and that's why it works."

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In Real Life

FIRST-PERSON AMERICA

WOODSY THERAPY

By Ray Wisher

NEAR AUBURN, ALABAMA—I am a deer hunter. I get a few now and then, but killing deer has never been the goal. My real aim is just to get away. As a cop, I live and work in a pressure-cooker environment; the peace and quiet of the forest recharges my batteries and makes it easier to deal with the idiocy of the real world.

My hunting grounds are in the great state of Alabama just outside Auburn. Not only is this part of the country one of God's greatest works, with its rolling hills, gentle granite-lined streams, hardwood bottoms and pine ridges, but the people are some of the kindest you'll ever meet.

I had become ill over the summer and the doctor's orders were simple: Ease up. I figured if I could get to October I would go bow hunting to blow off some steam, catch up on some sleep, and get away from the dopers, felons, and juvenile delinquents.

The trip started out rough. I was packing when dispatch called to say I was needed in court. The case wasn't mine; I told them I was on vacation. A few minutes later the phone rang again and my lieutenant was on the line. *God almighty, I am on vacation!* The doctor told me no stress. Quit trying to handle everything for everybody. I was out of there.

I drove all night to reach the cabin, but when I pulled up to the locked gate at three o'clock in the morning, I realized I had left my keys behind. I had to dig up a fence post to get in. Then I found the cabin locked, and my cabin keys were safely with my gate keys back in Florida. So I ended up sleeping in the truck for an hour.

When I awoke with my neck cramped and my legs still asleep, I jumped out and changed my clothes. Then I packed my stand and bow into the woods before daylight.

Traditional hunting with a recurve bow is a real art. Your range is only 20 yards, and an arrow needs vertical lanes in which to travel up in its arc then back down to the target. This limits where you can hunt and what shots you can make. To do it right you must scout around to find out where the deer are moving.

I hadn't had a chance to scout; so I stood in the dark, shining a flashlight looking for a good tree to hang a stand on which would allow some lanes to shoot through. I saw a good tree but decided the lanes weren't there. I walked 30 yards and found another tree. After cutting a couple of small limbs I had a good spot. I hooked up the climbing stand and pulled myself up the tree.

The black woods were still silent in the predawn. Slowly the early sunlight crept into the bottom. I could make out the outline of trees and underbrush and heard the woods start to come alive. Squirrels started scrambling down the trunk of their trees, birds started singing to each other, and the smell of trees and deep damp earth filled the air. It was like some giant slowly awakening to face another perfect day.

After an hour of scanning the inside of my eyelids for deer, I opened my eyes and turned slowly to my right. In the dim light I could see a doe standing in the brush. Her nose was to the ground where I had stepped earlier. Even the best effort to cover scent is never perfect. She couldn't see me in my full camouflage, but her nose wasn't fooled. Busted, I thought. Sure enough she backed up, slipped off into the morning mist, and disappeared. I was still thrilled. I tried to mark where she

THERE IS A SAYING AMONG HUNTERS: "TAKE YOUR CHILD HUNTING AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO HUNT YOUR CHILD."

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last stood and realized it was right under the tree I decided I couldn't shoot from. Figures. I relaxed and sat back. This was going to be a good hunt.

The morning passed but no more deer appeared. I got down and staggered up the steep ridge back to camp. I planned a short ride into town for supplies, a quick nap, and then a quiet afternoon hunt and an early bed. After shopping, my ears humming from fatigue, I went to the Golden Corral for lunch. Life is not complete until you get a meal from a small town Golden Corral. Catfish, mashed potatoes, chicken, hushpuppies, greens, cornbread, and sweet tea. Life was good. The humming left my ears, though I was still exhausted. No matter; 20 minutes and I would be in the sack sleeping for a couple of hours.

When I got back to camp I found Richard and his wife, new members of the hunting camp, had arrived with their gear. We met, shook hands, and Richard said he was having trouble with his all-terrain vehicle. I lent him some tools, and he proceeded to try to start the ATV over and over and over. I tried to lie down, but the whine of the starter wasn't conducive to sleep. Finally he gave up and came into the cabin.

He and his wife said they had brought a TV/VCR and did I want to watch a movie with them? "What movie do you have?" I asked. "*Titanic,*" they replied. *Titanic!* Are they kidding me? I'm in the middle of the woods, trying to get away, and I'm confronted with Leonardo DiCaprio. Is this a nightmare?

I ended up trading the movie for staying up to midnight, showing the two around and outfitting them with some equipment. Just before we turned in, Richard said he wanted to hunt the area I had scouted. Of course, I let him and went the next day to another area, apparently void of deer because I never saw a thing. But the morning was beautiful and the sky was a brilliant blue. On the walk back to camp another deer jumped up and snorted. I watched her play and leap around me, trying to figure out what I was. She never presented a shot. And frankly I wasn't that interested.

THE ARROW WENT FLYING BUT NOT AT THE DEER. I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD HER LAUGHING.

The rest of the hunters showed up Friday, wanting to talk instead of sleep. I met Jimmy and his 13-year-old son; two really nice people and big-time deer harvesters. You could see this huge bond between them.

Saturday was a quiet time. No deer, but good weather. I had a chance to scout around and found a ridge full of white oaks and acorns. Deer magnets. I set up early Sunday and waited. The sun came up red, and the light bounced off the puffy clouds down into the woods around me. The rose-colored hue was stunning. If I died right then I couldn't have asked for more.

About 11:00 I was dozing—I mean concentrating on listening to the sound of leaves in the trees and squirrels on the ground. The warm sun was beating down on my head. I did a scan around the woods. Trees, bushes, trees, legs, trees, *huh?* Legs! A deer had slipped up to my left about 30 yards out. All I could see were her legs. She moved around the thicket and edged slowly downwind. Unfortunately, downwind was directly behind my stand. She moved within 20 yards or so but was still behind some trees. I knew if she kept moving she would eventually wind me and spook. I saw a gap in the trees and thought she was going to step out into it. But the angle was bad. I had practiced this shot before from my stand and knew the odds against hitting anything were high. The trunk and the stand were in the way. But I had to give it a try.

I twisted around and leaned out as far as I dared, being 15 feet off the ground. Sure enough the deer stepped out. A perfect broadside shot. I pulled back on the bow and released. All heck broke loose. The bow snapped back and hit me in the head, nearly knocking me out of the stand. The arrow went flying but not at the deer. The deer jumped and turned, stopping long enough to try to figure out what in the heck just happened. I could have sworn I heard her laughing.

I looked down to see what went wrong and realized the bow had hit the side of the trunk, then bounced back at me. I wasn't upset. I was tickled to see a deer and know my practice and study had paid off. I missed but that was not the point; the point was I was in a beautiful place, full of beautiful creatures. Stress and fatigue fell away in sheets.

On my trip back to Florida I thought about Jimmy and his boy. There is a saying among hunters: "Take your child hunting and you won't have to hunt your child." Jimmy couldn't even have been in his mid-thirties, still young and full of energy. I thought about my daughter turning four and my son turning two this year and realized I would be 50 when they took their place alongside me. I felt jealous, and tears started working their way up.

Lately I have been feeling mortal for the first time in my life. I think about someday not "being" anymore. It makes the time in the woods more precious, but it also makes me realize that if I had the chance to do it again, I would start a family sooner. I pray I can be here long enough to make sure all I know and all I believe in can be given to my children. Hunting will be part of it. My children love the idea of going hunting with Daddy. They will learn to respect nature, the animals, and their role in all of it.

Now I'm back in the world of burglars and idiots injuring innocent victims. But every once in a while I close my eyes and see that doe standing broadside in the brilliant sunshine, her rich brown coat glistening. In my mind's eye I see the arrow flying true. I turn to see the bow in my daughter's hands and her eyes wide with excitement. A dream I can hold on to.

Ray Wisher is a Florida detective and regular contributor to The American Enterprise.

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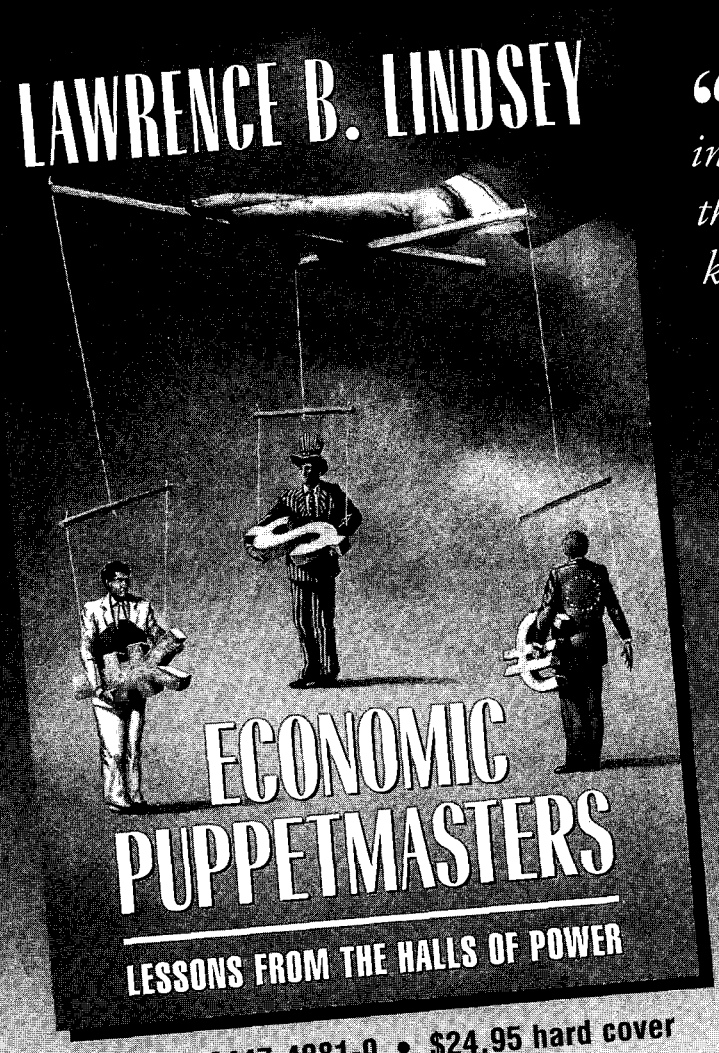

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Stock Market Trumps Social Security Even During Dips

Cheerleaders for government-provided Social Security were surprisingly mum in recent years as the U.S. stock market charged upward and advocates of pension privatization won converts to their cause. But as the markets fell in late summer from their July peak, those who love Uncle Sam's largest program spoke up with renewed urgency.

"AT RISK," screamed the cover of the October 1998 *Solidarity*, the magazine of the United Auto Workers. "Wall Street Wants to Take Over Social Security." Inside, author Fred Solowey crowed that "the summer decline has been a bracing slap of cold water in the face for the new wave of politicians that see individual stock market investments as the best route to secure, happy retirement for Americans."

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare weighed in with a September newspaper ad: "On Monday, the stock market dropped by over 500 points," it declared. "On Tuesday, millions of Americans received their Social Security checks. Aren't you glad Social Security hasn't been privatized?"

Meanwhile, soldiers for the status quo rattled their sabers on Capitol Hill. "The events of August should shut up, once and for all, those privatizers who want to make Social Security dependent on investments in the stock market," Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.) snapped to the Associated Press. "Markets that go up can go down."

What the anti-privatization forces have not acknowledged in the months *since* August is that, to reverse Congressman Stark's negative dictum, markets that go down eventually go up. In fact, as of this writing, the Dow has completely rebounded from its end-of-summer losses. As of early-December, the S&P 500 was up 23 percent for calendar year 1998, the Dow had risen 18 percent, and the NASDAQ composite had soared 28 percent. So much for stocks being a financial disaster.

While recent swings in equity values have made privatization a tougher sell to politicians and journalists, the fact remains that stocks would have to plunge *far* lower than they did this summer to deliver the dismal returns that Social Security now offers routinely. To bring this fact to life, just compare a conservative private retirement portfolio to a typical worker's anticipated Social Security benefits.

In their recent book, *A New Deal for Social Security*, Peter Ferrara and Michael Tanner explain that between 1926 and 1996, U.S. stocks produced a real average annual return of 7.6 percent. This number factors in the losses during the Great Depression, Watergate, and the 1987 stock market crash. Compare that with Social Security's miserable annual returns: Two low-income workers will earn an average of just 2.1 percent a year on their Social Security payments. An *average*-income two-earner couple will do even worse—only 0.8 percent annually.

The picture is even more bleak for new and future workers. Given Social Security's coming implosion as the Baby Boomers retire, young Americans will see *negative* returns on their FICA contributions. As Arthur P. Hall of the Tax Foundation estimates, teenagers now entering the workforce can look forward to Social Security returns of *minus* 2 percent—in other words, less than they put in. When the First Bank of the Mattress trumps Social Security, there is a problem. There is hardly an investment portfolio imaginable that would not be more attractive than snoozing on one's savings.

In a Cato Institute study, economists Bill Shipman and Melissa Hieger illustrate how deep stocks would have to sink to match the low returns promised by Social Security. They imagine that those retiring today had been able to invest their FICA taxes in a mixture of 60 percent stocks and 40 percent bonds paying actual historical returns.

A low-wage worker who was making about $13,000 at retirement would have to see the stock markets plunge 54 percent before his yearly private annuity payments of $10,473 shrank to the $7,092 that Social Security offers. For an average-wage worker who earned close to $27,000 at retirement, the equity markets would have to drop 79 percent before his $20,945 in annuity checks shriveled to the $11,040 Social Security offers. Stocks could tumble as much as they did on October 19, 1987 (when the S&P 500 index fell 20 percent) and then stay down, and a private stock and bond portfolio would still leave these seniors wealthier than Social Security.

Even with its regular, built-in, detours, Wall Street remains a much more rewarding place to park one's retirement funds than Uncle Sam's giant Ponzi scheme.

Americans who rely solely on Social Security miss out on the income and independence enjoyed by those who invest in capital markets. By allowing workers to place some or all of their Social Security taxes in personal retirement accounts, Washington could spread true wealth to Americans who are strangers to financial security. Their freedom would yield prosperity.

—Deroy Murdock

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Enterprising

ON BUSINESS AS AN IMAGINATIVE ACT

Recycling Is an Economic Activity, Not a Moral Imperative

By Jesse Walker and Pierre Desrochers

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Recycling—the great moral crusade of the late 1990s—was something rather different in nineteenth-century Paris: "Here we have a man," wrote Baudelaire, "whose job it is to pick up the day's rubbish in the capital. He collects and catalogues everything the great city has cast off, everything it has lost, and discarded, and broken. He goes through the archives of debauchery, and the confused array of refuse. He makes a selection, an intelligent choice; like a miser hoarding treasure, he collects the garbage that will become objects of utility or pleasure when refurbished by Industrial magic."

The poet was describing the rag-pickers of Paris, whom the authorities of the day regarded with far less admiration than did Baudelaire. For France's municipal leaders, those thousands of small-scale recyclers were filthy pests, disorderly and unsanitary. The city prefect, Eugene Poubelle, cracked down on the junk-hunters, demanding that Parisians only put their garbage cans (or *poubelles,* as they were quickly nicknamed) outside their homes 15 minutes before collection. Over 30,000 rag-pickers rioted and Poubelle retreated an inch, permitting a limited trash trade in what we would call a flea market.

Across the Atlantic, Colonel George E. Waring became commissioner of street cleaning in New York, where many poor immigrants had also taken to salvaging junk for a living. Waring saw them as competitors. He also considered them a threat to public sanitation, which, if you think about it, contradicts the first objection. Waring's attitudes were typical of the nascent Progressive movement: He confused neatness with cleanliness, and coercion with order.

Today rag-picking still occurs in the Third World, and poor folks don't just scavenge for junk to resell but also for personal use. As in the First World a hundred years ago, the authorities regard them as a nuisance. The Bengali policy analyst Abu Sinha notes that Bangladeshi officials view informal recyclers as an "eyesore" and a hindrance to garbage collection. So most towns try to keep the rag-pickers away from the dumps, ignoring their contributions to the local economy.

In Hanoi, however, American observers estimated in 1993 that scavengers collected 250 of the 830 tons of refuse the city produced each day. Writing in the *Far Eastern Economic Review,* Murray Hiebert commented that "nearly everything of value is recycled in Hanoi," perhaps in part because up to then the government had not interfered with the waste-recycling network. Communist Vietnam's recycling policy is thus, at least in this way, more *laissez-faire* than anything that exists in the capitalist West.

Americans often forget that recycling is an economic activity, and insist on treating it instead as a moral imperative. The American ritual of separating trash into various categories of glass, paper, etc., would not survive without public coercion and private compulsions. Few regard it as an intrinsically useful activity—in large part because it often isn't. The dirty little secret unknown to Americans who conscientiously rinse out their bottles every evening is that much of the recyclable material they so fastidiously sort and store ends up getting dumped together and buried anyway after it leaves their curb. Lots of the items that are now illegal to throw away are uneconomic to recycle, and actually cost *more* to reuse—in money, energy, and time—than they would to landfill.

But when discerning agents (like rag-pickers) are allowed to make choices in what they take and what they leave, there are lots of good reasons to recycle. Scavengers foraging through junk heaps, sep-

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arating the trash that no one else will, don't have the greater social good on their minds. They're mining materials for which there's a market, and they're making a living, albeit a dirty one.

Most people seem to think recycling began a few decades ago as a solution devised in Washington by environmental saints. In fact, it's always been a vibrant business. And not just for rag-pickers, as a sampling of old book titles reveals: *Millions from Waste* (1920), *By-products in the Packing Industry* (1927), *The Recovery and Use of Industrial and Other Waste* (1928).

Indeed, recycling stretches back to prehistory as a human activity. Consider the many uses our ancestors found for animal residuals. At first, they merely killed beasts for food; what could not be eaten was thrown away. Then pelts were turned into clothing, allowing men and women to live in colder climes. Soon animal blood became a crude sort of paint, and bones became rudimentary jewelry.

The German paleontologist Oscar Todkopf has unearthed several 50,000-year-old musical instruments made from dead animals, from a mastodon tusk dotted with 16 carefully aligned holes (thus suggesting that Neanderthals used an octave scale) to an item that resembles a bagpipe. The "bag" part disintegrated long ago, but it left a protein stain on the rock where it was found; it was probably fashioned from a large beast's bladder.

Other examples of early waste products being put to new economic uses: a 17,000-year-old sandstone lamp that burned animal fat; a 15,000-year-old village built from the bones of 149 woolly mammoths; the oldest glue discovered so far, 8,000 years old, made from a fibrous protein taken from animal skin, cartilage, and bone.

Jump forward a few millennia, to ancient Rome. Latin texts describe shops located close to slaughterhouses that turned bones and ivory into pins, tokens, buttons, and components of hinges, among other items. The strong cables used in Roman war machines were fashioned from women's hair and animal nerves.

In North America, the Plains Indians wasted no part of the buffalo, fashioning everything from sleds to tableware to dice from the hair, bones, tail, fat, hoofs, stomach, liver—we could go on, but it gets disgusting. The Inuit of the Arctic turned seals and caribou into shovels, bows, toys, whips, kayaks, even primitive sunglasses.

RECYCLING HAS NOT OCCURRED UNTIL THE LOOP HAS BEEN CLOSED, UNTIL SOMEONE TAKES THE SORTED MATERIALS, MANUFACTURES THEM INTO SOMETHING ELSE, AND EITHER USES THAT SOMETHING OR SELLS IT BACK TO THE PUBLIC.

By the early nineteenth century, slaughterhouse by-products were commonly turned into glue, soap, fertilizer, hog and chicken feed, combs, knife-handles, even a glass substitute suitable for lanterns. As chemistry advanced, Chicago's stockyards evolved into what might be called an "eco-industrial park," as small satellite industries producing everything from cosmetics to explosives appeared around the giant cattle-killing plants. By the turn of the century, Chicago's own Mr. Dooley could observe, "A cow goes lowin' softly in Armour's an' comes out glue, gelatine, fertilizer, celooloid, joolry, sofy cusions, hair restorer, washin' sody, littrachoor and bed springs so quick that while aft she's still cow, forward she may be anything from buttons to pannyma hats." Were he writing today, he might have added hemoglobin, suitcases, and sausage wrappers (pigs wrapped in cows!) to his list.

And all this without benefit of a curbside recycling program. No one forced slaughterhouses to separate their animal remains; no city sanitation workers collected them and brought them to the reusers' doors. People *paid* the plants for their wastes.

Indeed, the popular image of recycling—segregating trash into distinct categories, leaving it neatly sorted on the curb, watching the garbage men haul it away—doesn't really constitute recycling at all. It constitutes sorting and collecting. Recycling has not occurred until the loop has been closed, until someone takes the sorted materials, manufactures them into something else, and either uses that something or sells it back to the public.

Recycling programs as popularly conceived are usually failures. The evidence ranges from the piles of collected metals left unused after World War II to the mounts of unwanted glass that pile up in recycling centers today. There simply isn't a big enough market for the deluge of recovered residuals such programs generate. Often they collect materials whose value is less than the cost of collection alone, making "recycling" more wasteful than simple disposal. What's more, mandatory collection programs can prevent commodities from flowing to places where they would be best used. For example, many incinerators seek out discarded paper and plastics to start their thermal processes, but municipalities that insist all paper be recycled block this use, while often flooding the recycling market with more discarded paper than can be used.

The problem, here as elsewhere, is central planning. Governments simply don't know what recyclables would be best used where. Nor can they anticipate the innovations that might turn worthless wastes into valuable raw materials.

Far better to look to the grimy trades, to those who pick through junk piles or find uses for inedible animal parts. To do this well we must avoid confusing environmental sense with neatness or prettiness: Nature is dirty and chaotic, and though it makes sense to protect ourselves against activities that would actually endanger public health, we have no reason to expect our ecological activities not to mirror the larger ecology. Let entrepreneurs re-enter the realms of collection and recycling to find yet more uses for the trash we toss. The rag-picker of today could be the junk-mining professional of tomorrow.

Jesse Walker and Pierre Desrochers write often on environmental issues.

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Flashback

TO KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN IS TO REMAIN EVER A CHILD—*Cicero*

Arts & Crafts Apostle

Elbert Hubbard was a Buffalo soap salesman *non pareil* whose hobby was coining epigrams such as "take my advice—take nobody's!" He nursed literary ambitions like a swollen thumb, but his submissions to the popular magazines came back attached to rejection slips. So in 1895 the 39-year-old Hubbard did what frustrated writers dream of doing: He started his own magazine. With characteristic defiance, he named it *The Philistine*, dubbed himself "Fra Elbertus," and became one of the great American eccentrics.

The Fra braved conspicuousness. He wore, as one biographer wrote, "a large Buster Brown cravat, baggy corduroys, flannel shirt, farmer's brogans, and western Stetson. His hair was naturally curly, and he let it grow to his shoulders, giving a pageboy effect."

The Philistine was a hodgepodge of maxims, clever ads, contributions by such Hubbardites as young Stephen Crane, corny jokes that would make a Bob Hope gagwriter wince, and megalomaniacal self-promotion. Hubbard hit it big in1899 with his hortatory tale, "A Message to Garcia," a tribute to the can-do spirit; the story was reprinted an astonishing 40 million times.

But *The Philistine* was just one of the indefatigable Hubbard's ventures. A believer in the principles of both William Morris and modern advertising—think of Darren Stevens, the husband on "Bewitched," joining a commune—Hubbard founded a colony of craftsmen in East Aurora, New York. They called themselves Roycrofters, after seventeenth-century English bookbinders, and on this "culture farm" Hubbard grew more than a thousand printers, painters, sculptors, and book and furniture makers.

Roycroft was among the most successful artistic colonies, in part because Hubbard did not disdain commerce as grubby and soul-stealing. As his nephew wrote, "to Elbert…business and commerce and Christian service are congruous, providing satisfactions to all."

"Take the train for East Aurory, where we work for Art and Glory," rhymed Hubbard, who took boosterism to new heights. "Let's see! Let's see!" he wrote. (Elbert preferred the exclamation mark to the dull period.) "What is it they pursue in Boston? Culture! That's it! In East Aurora we don't have to pursue Culture. She feels at home and abides with us!"

The guardians of Culture generally dismissed Hubbard as a mountebank, a man of consuming crassness, and a plagiarist. (As one embittered ex-employee cracked, "Truth is, the Fra never could acquire a due respect for quotation marks.") But his champions were fervent. Young Carl Sandburg, the "People, Yes!" poet, made a pilgrimage and came away convinced that "future generations…will pronounce him one of the greatest men the world ever saw."

Elbert married a girl named Bertha from—inaptly—Normal, Illinois: As he later wrote with some indelicacy, "Great men often marry commonplace women." Bertha bore him four children, but before long the uncommon Fra had tired of old Mother Hubbard, and was scandalizing East Aurora by conducting a flagrant affair with a free-thinking woman whom he later married.

Equal parts huckster, anarchist, and apostle of the Arts and Crafts movement, Hubbard reversed field with the dexterity of football star Barry Sanders.

Whereas in 1905 he had imagined John D. Rockefeller, Sr., riding "through a sea of stiffening corpses," by 1914 he was announcing, "I believe in Big Business and more of it." In an act of ideological entrepreneurship, he praised the Rockefeller family's suppression of a Colorado coal miners' strike and thoughtfully dropped a note to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., noting, "The price of extra copies…is $200 a thousand." (Rumor had it that mine interests bought a million copies, but Hubbard complained that the skinflint Rockefeller "said 'Great!' and bought a dozen copies or so.")

So the indomitable Fra took up a new crusade: peace in Europe. Declaring himself "ex-officio General Inspector of the Universe, with power to investigate everything and report on anything in any way I choose," he and his second wife boarded the *Lusitania* in hopes of leading the Kaiser into pacific waters. The Germans torpedoed Elbert's last bright idea.

Three years earlier, Hubbard had joined the chorus in praise of Mr. and Mrs. Isidore Straus, the elderly couple who went down together on the *Titanic*, refusing separation. To die like the Strauses "is glorious," rhapsodized the Fra. "Few have such a privilege. Happy lovers, both. In life they were never separated, and in death they are not divided."

As the *Lusitania* sank, Elbert and Alice Hubbard left the deck and walked into a cabin. They were never seen again. Elbert had pursued glory, and found her a most demanding mistress.

—Bill Kauffman

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Scene from *The Thin Red Line*

Marie W. Wallace © 20th Century Fox

World War II Wild Card

Hollywood's fascination with the Second World War rolls on, with a dozen projects currently in development at major studios. The next movie to tackle WWII, *The Thin Red Line,* will be a big one, costing more than $50 million to make and featuring a stellar cast that includes Nick Nolte, George Clooney, John Travolta, Sean Penn, and Woody Harrelson. This dramatization of the Battle of Guadalcanal will arrive in theaters in late December, the offspring of two of America's most unusual storytellers.

Writer-director Terrence Malick, a famous recluse who hasn't directed a picture since Carter was President, hasn't given an interview since 1974. It's unclear how he'll portray the bloody event. Those close to the project are revealing little, but one thing's certain: With Malick behind it, the film is a wild card. After all, how many other directors once had a day job as a logger and spent evenings translating the philosopher Heidegger from German to English? Asked several years ago what he was interested in filming, Malick answered: Molière's play *Tartuffe* and James Jones' novel *The Thin Red Line.*

A Waco, Texas native, Malick grew up working on oil wells and cement mixers before attending Harvard. He graduated in 1966; then went to England on a Rhodes scholarship. After that, he became a collector of experiences, lecturing in philosophy at MIT and writing for *Newsweek, Life,* and the *New Yorker.*

Though his wife warned, "Do not get into the movie business. It will kill your soul," Malick nevertheless found his way to Hollywood. He made two well-regarded pictures: *Badlands* (1973), a story set in the '50s about a young man and his accomplice girlfriend who go on a killing spree through South Dakota, and *Days of Heaven* (1978), about Texas drifters before World War I. Neither were box office successes, but *Days of Heaven* garnered an Oscar for cinematography.

Malick reportedly became frustrated with the movie business, however, and withdrew to the extent that one associate described being involved with him as "like working with the CIA." Reputedly a devout Episcopalian, Malick never completed his next project—a World War I film that was to begin with a prologue about the "creation of the universe." Finally, in 1989, he started working on a screenplay of *The Thin Red Line.*

The late James Jones, who wrote the 1962 novel, was another unorthodox character. Once described as "akin to Marcus Aurelius in his long apprenticeship to war, suffering, and the effort to bear it all," Jones' best work was inspired by his experience in the Army, which he joined fresh out of high school in 1939 and served in until 1944.

An eyewitness to Pearl Harbor, Jones later landed on Guadalcanal, where he was forced to defend himself by killing a Japanese soldier in hand-to-hand combat. His experiences sparked an intense interest in U.S. military history that animated such works as *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line.* The latter was dedicated to "those greatest and most heroic of all human endeavors, WAR and WARFARE; may they never cease to…provide us with the heroes, the Presidents and leaders, the monuments and museums which we erect to them in the name of PEACE."

This sentiment was tough for some literati to swallow. Close friends like William Styron, who said military life was without "human dignity" and causes "men to behave mostly like beasts," surely parted company with Jones' affection for the Army. The divergence between Jones and the literati became even more stark after he visited Vietnam in the early 1970s. Jones bristled at those who cast aspersions on U.S. servicemen as murderers and rapists, and he refused to toe the "Viet Cong are innocent peasant-patriots" line championd by many of his colleagues.

It remains to be seen how James Jones will be treated by Hollywood today. A source who worked on the picture told me that while it will surely depart from the heroic portrayals of World War II servicemen in such films as *Sands of Iwo Jima* and *Saving Private Ryan,* and even though the title is derived from the saying, "There's a thin red line between the sane and the mad," the movie will stop short of the *Platoon-Apocalypse Now* approach where soldiers are deranged psychopaths. "I think there will be a modicum of incompetence and darker sides to characters," the source said. He added that Malick's chief mission was to present Guadalcanal "as it really was—unblinking, no holds barred."

When I asked executive producer George Stevens, Jr., whether the movie would show American soldiers exhibiting bravery, sacrifice, and leadership, I was struck by his answer: "Guadalcanal called upon sacrifice. Sacrifice—that's really what it's about. Young men went 6,000 miles from home to do what their country said needed to be done."

Actually, many American soldiers—and surely Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipient James Jones—were doing what *they* knew needed to be done at Guadalcanal. How will Terrence Malick deal with that daunting call to duty?

—John Meroney

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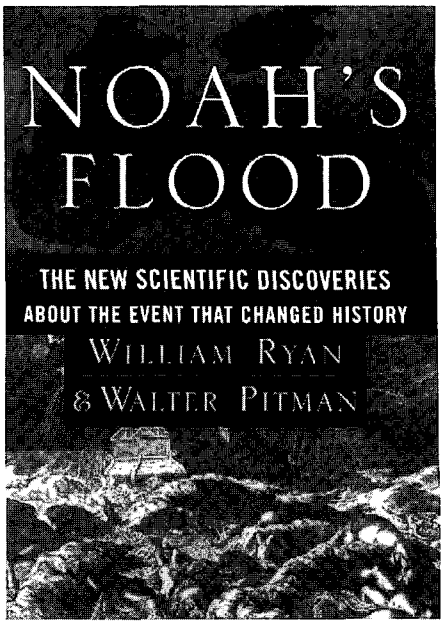
BookTalk



DOCUMENTING THE DELUGE

By Frederick Turner

Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event That Changed History
By William Ryan and Walter Pitman
Simon & Schuster, 298 pages, $25

What is the relationship between scientific truth and religious truth? Are they two alternative and contradictory explanations of the same universe, one true, one false? Do they describe, without contradiction, two completely different universes? Or do they describe the same universe, in different ways? If the last, how are we to describe that difference, so as to avoid bringing the two views into unnecessary conflict?

In the exhausted standoff that followed the bloody religious wars of the renaissance and reformation, science and religion agreed to confine themselves to separate territories—science to the realm of fact, religion to the realm of value. That truce allowed for the great intellectual achievements of the Enlightenment, including the foundations of physics and chemistry, and the U.S. Constitution. But it also, perhaps, led to an uncertainty about what is good and true and important in the human sphere, whose damaging consequences we see all about us in education, the family, and public morality. The separation of science and religion also led perhaps to a denaturing of scientific knowledge, a stripping from it of human significance and thus historical meaning.

Today there are signs that the cordon sanitaire, the quarantine between religion and science, can no longer be preserved. The logic of religion itself has led its moral theology back from the otherworldly contemplation of the divine to a renewed concern with the world of physical reality and human history; there have been too many scandals of religion standing lost in prayer at the sidelines while Holocausts, Gulags, famines, ethnic cleansings, and other human disasters cried out for practical action and attention to real facts. Meanwhile science has given birth to technologies that can no longer be viewed as value-free—reproductive interventions, recombinant DNA manipulation of the genes of animals, plants, and humans, mood-altering drugs, and suchlike. Scientists have begun to speculate in a scientifically legitimate and testable way about issues that are of intense concern to religion, such as the origins of the universe and the possibility of artificial intelligence. Scientific historical scholarship has turned its attention to the life of Jesus. Most fundamental of all is the issue of evolution, where there are contested claims to fundamental truth.

William Ryan and Walter Pitman in their fascinating book *Noah's Flood* have given us, without entirely meaning to, an opening to the reconciliation of science and religion, at least in the special case of the Great Flood. The book tells two stories—one, spanning tens of thousands of years, the epic saga of how human civilization in Asia and Europe survived and flourished in the huge climatic and geological changes that followed the last Ice Age; the other, spanning a couple of centuries, how religious and historical scholars, archaeologists, oceanographers, earth scientists, and climatologists pieced together the first story.

It turns out that religious accounts and scientific accounts complement each other very nicely. The key event is the catastrophic flooding of the Black Sea basin, by salt waters from the Mediterranean that broke through the Bosphorus about 7,000 years ago, driving the human civilizations that flourished on the rich coasts of the shrunken lake into a great diaspora. This event shows up in the myths and legends of dozens of nations. Shipborne survivors of the flood could indeed have fetched up on the foothills of the mountain range that includes Mount Ararat.

The story of how the deluge was discovered is deeply instructive as to the proper relation of religion and science. In the nineteenth century there were two camps on the issue of the flood: a fundamentalist camp, which hoped to use the new geological evidence that large areas of dry land had once been under water as support for the Biblical deluge; and a secular camp, which saw the new geology as sweeping away centuries of superstition and revealing the flood story as a mere fable. As the evidence mounted, the secular camp seemed to be vindicated; there could have been no world flood, and the geological history of the planet appeared to be one of gradual accumulation and incremental evolution rather than one of dramatic divine interventions. But meanwhile, brilliant and courageous young scholars and archae-

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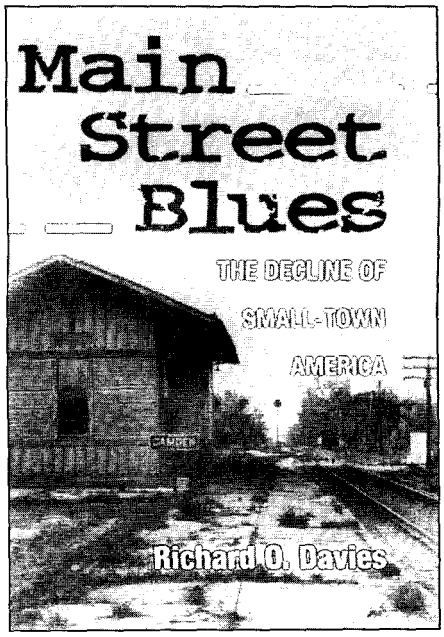
ologists, braving the dangers of the turbulent Middle East, had begun to unearth the literature and history of the ancient Fertile Crescent, revealing strong historical evidence for some kind of deluge as described in the Bible. And as the twentieth century brought in more and more sophisticated techniques of dating, geological analysis, and data management, a different picture of world geological history began to emerge, one full of natural catastrophes, sudden changes of climate, and, yes, enormous flood events.

The upshot, the discovery of the Black Sea flood, has bad news and good news for both camps. The secularists have to face the disquieting fact that many of the events described in the Bible can now be documented; the Biblical literalists are faced with a flood that was not a worldwide event. Science is vindicated in this book by the demonstration of its careful process and self-critical concern for accuracy: Time and again the researchers that Ryan and Pitman interviewed were forced by the evidence to accept explanations totally opposite to their own opinion and the consensus of their colleagues. The libel current in postmodernist humanities departments, that scientists only find out what they want to find, is once again triumphantly refuted. Scientists are often genuinely surprised by facts, which proves that facts really exist and are not a figment of people's imaginations or an artifact of their methods and worldview.

But the religious account of the world is also vindicated. For though the flood was not a worldwide event in a literal sense, the evidence seems to be that the great diaspora of human cultures—spreading new methods of agriculture, pottery making, techniques of architecture, and the Indo-European group of languages across huge areas of Asia, Europe, and Africa—could be said to be the originating event in world civilization, and indeed of global importance in terms of human history. The religious account gives us two things. One is the hint without which the scientific investigation might never have happened, the big picture into which otherwise unconnected observations could be fitted. The other thing we get from the religious account is the meaning, importance, and thrust of how people took the flood, what it did to them and how it affected their later actions. The very thought that the species life of humanity itself might be ended by some natural catastrophe was perhaps as important as the first realization by some intelligent and introspective cave-dweller of his own personal death, and perhaps our own realization after Hiroshima that we could be the agents of our own extinction. The covenant with God or the gods that occurs in all the religious accounts, and thus the beginning of human history as itself a meaningful process, is both epochal in importance and inaccessible to natural science.

The significance of *Noah's Flood* is that now we can see side by side what kind of physical event might correlate with a religious story, and what kind of significance a scientific fact might have when seen in the light of religious meaning. Religious faith does not mean shutting the eye of reason; and scientific knowledge is not the end but the beginning of understanding. If we return to the controversies that have reopened the religion-science debate, we may find equally challenging reinterpretations, not quite satisfactory to true believers on either side, on such grave questions as evolution, abortion, genetic research, and the Big Bang. The great achievements of the renaissance were based on the unremitting desire to reconcile faith and reason; perhaps we are ready to take up that high mission again, in a more peaceful and ecumenical way. What stands out in *Noah's Flood* is the commitment of all the researchers, whatever their religious or scientific opinions, to the pure pursuit of truth. There is no substitute for that pursuit. The truth can never harm what is of deepest value to the soul.

Frederick Turner is Founders Professor of Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas, Dallas, and the author, among other works, of Natural Classicism: Essays on Literature and Science.



A TOWN CALLED HOPELESS

By Philip Langdon

Main Street Blues: The Decline of Small-Town America
By Richard O. Davies
Ohio State University Press, 236 pages, $39.95

When Americans are asked where they'd like to live, more of them say "a small town" than say a city or a suburb. The appeal of a human-scale place where people know your name never dissipates. But the prospect that large numbers of people might actually *move* from metropolis to Mayberry and immerse themselves in a close-knit, intensely local community is about as realistic as expecting rock-and-roll bands to be pushed aside by barbershop quartets.

The truth is, Americans live in metropolitan areas because they *prefer* the things metropolitan life has to offer: better-paying and more stimulating work, a broader choice of shopping and entertainment, energetic cultural institutions, and so on. This preference goes part of the way toward explaining why many small towns, especially those beyond commuting range of urban job centers, are in such dismal shape. If you want to know just how dismal, read Richard O. Davies' melancholy chronicle of his hometown, Camden, Ohio.

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Davies, a history professor at the University of Nevada-Reno, admits in the opening pages that after graduating from high school in 1955, he rarely went back to Camden, until a sabbatical in 1995. The reader soon senses why: Camden is worn out.

Davies recalls the town he grew up in as a middle-class white Protestant community of overwhelmingly northern European descent. Situated in agricultural country 40 miles north of Cincinnati, Camden had a typical assortment of locally owned Main Street businesses—a drug store with a marble-counter soda fountain, a Ford and a Chevy dealership, a butcher shop, a few mom-and-pop grocery stores, and other modest enterprises, all of which served not only the town's residents (just over 1,000 in 1950) but also the families who operated small farms in nearby portions of Preble County. The biggest industry was farm-related: a company that made concrete silos and other storage facilities.

Camden's one claim to fame was that Sherwood Anderson was born there. Anderson's stunning psychological portrait of small-town life, *Winesburg, Ohio*, was primarily based, however, on another Ohio town—Clyde, in the state's northern tier—and it was not until the 1940s that Camden's leaders felt comfortable advertising their town's link to an author who divulged small-town secrets.

Camden seems to have offered pleasant if unluxurious living, leavened by plentiful community activity, for much of its history. But since the 1950s, the town has lost its spirit and most of its reasons for being. The local bank was absorbed by an out-of-town institution. The silo manufacturer shut down. Most of the stores went out of business. The local newspaper stopped publishing. The high school moved out of town. The Progressive Club, historically a major impetus for whatever civic ambitions the town possessed, petered out. Camden became a *Last Picture Show* kind of place. Today grass grows up through Main Street's cracked sidewalks, and old houses want for repair. The business district has become, says Davies, "a veritable slum."

Davies sees Camden as representative of ills that afflict small towns nationwide. Poverty and unemployment rates in small towns rival those in America's biggest cities, he reports. More than 40 percent of Camden's schoolchildren qualify for the federal school-lunch program. Though Camden's population has doubled since 1950, to 2,210, attitudes are anything but upbeat. The boosterism formerly associated with small-town life has given way to fatalism. "We've got five churches and six bars, so you can go either way," says one local man quoted by Davies.

The author's stated premise is a familiar one: The fate of small towns reflects distant forces over which they have no control. Certainly Camden had no choice but to accept the automobile—a machine that let most of the town's consumer spending gravitate to bigger, cheaper, or more modern stores elsewhere. The automobile has made it possible for commuting wage-earners from the Dayton area to live in Camden, but the arrival of outsiders has failed to offset the near-disappearance of a locally based business and professional class—traditionally the chief source of American community leadership. The consolidation and mechanization of agriculture undermined the small-town economy, while the proliferation of broadcast and recorded entertainment undercut people's involvement with their neighbors. In light of fundamental changes in transportation, the economy, and the uses of leisure time, it was practically inevitable that Camden, and many other small towns, would surrender their cohesiveness and community spirit.

How strange, then, that the closing pages of this book suggest that "one of the overlooked tragedies of modern American history has been the trashing of its small communities by federal policies." Suddenly an author who has recounted Camden residents' eagerness to shop in Dayton and Cincinnati is blaming state and federal transportation departments for bypassing downtown Camden. Suddenly he heaps blame on the farm lobby, which promoted federal policies that served agribusiness, accelerated the demise of small family farms, and "reduced even further the economic base of the nation's farm towns."

Transportation departments, agriculture policies, and other federal activities have all hurt small towns. Of that, there should be no doubt. But this calls for much deeper discussion than Davies offers as he shuts the door on "The Town We Left Behind." *Main Street Blues* fails to explain how some small towns, such as Brattleboro, Vermont, and Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, rather than succumbing to harsh trends, have retained an impressive vitality. But whatever this book lacks, it does provide a clear picture of just how dispirited many small towns have become.

Associate editor Philip Langdon is author of A Better Place to Live: Reshaping the American Suburb.

FREQUENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD FLIER

By Paul Gottfried

Lindbergh
By A. Scott Berg
G. P. Putnam, 628 pages, $40

A. Scott Berg's massive biography highlights the variegated life of that solo aviator who flew "The Spirit of St. Louis" in 1927. Dutiful son of a Minnesota populist and impassioned American patriot, Lindbergh spent years as a world traveler and self-declared expatriate. He was an earnest ecologist and developer of commercial aviation and, though an outspoken opponent of American involvement in the Second World War, later flew numerous heroic missions in the South Pacific. Because of an undeserved reputation as a Nazi sympathizer, and the dislike of FDR, the former America Firster was not awarded a military commission during the war.

While Berg's biography offers detailed judgments about the "trial of the century" that followed the kidnapping and murder of Lindbergh's infant son, it does not presume to be revisionist. Upon examination of evidence from the 1935 court case, and after interviews with the surviving participants or their families, Berg finds the verdict given to Bruno Richard Hauptmann, the convicted killer, to have been entirely reasonable. Whatever sensationalist rhetoric was uttered by the prosecutor, David T. Wilentz, and whatever linguistic

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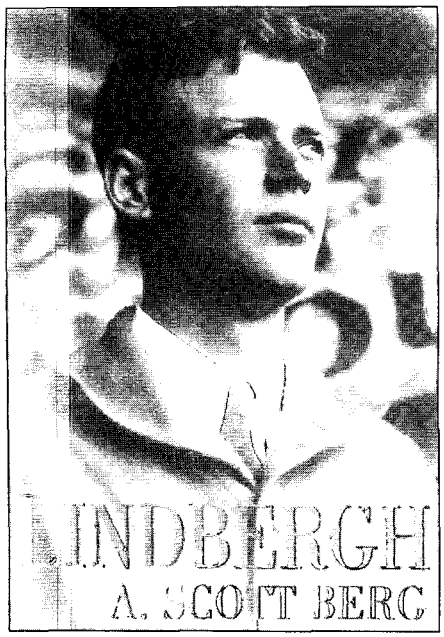

problems faced Hauptmann, according to his widow, the circumstantial evidence for his guilt (from handwriting samples to his use of the ransom money) was truly overwhelming. Alan Dershowitz is right that such a verdict today might be overturned on technical grounds, but that does not mean the accused was not guilty as charged.

The most revealing (for me) part of this biography is the presentation of Lindbergh's role in the debate over the proper American involvement in the general European war begun in 1939. While most participants on both sides of the American debate found the Nazis distasteful, without fully grasping the demonic nature of Hitler's regime, much of the battle was waged between Anglophiles and their critics. Though anti-Communism and fear of Soviet expansion affected Lindbergh's view of Nazi Germany, from September 1939 into the spring of 1941 the Soviets and Nazis were allies; American Communists, like the young Bella Abzug, were then proclaiming English imperialism to be an even worse evil than Nazi aggression. Anti-interventionists spanned the political spectrum. Among them the overwhelming majority—for example, Norman Thomas, William Borah, Chester Bowles, and Hamilton Fish, all associated with America First—were neither pro-Nazi nor anti-Semitic, nor even noticeably on the right. Such activists believed that the Second World War was a kind of repetition of the First, basically a European civil war which Americans should stay out of militarily. The feverish presence of English agents in high places, as recently documented by Thomas Mahl in *Desperate Deception,* added grist to the anti-interventionist mill. The reason that most Americans in 1941 were both strongly anti-Nazi and persistently anti-interventionist was the memory of having fought in an earlier misrepresented war, against Germany on the side of England. The "war to end all wars" had resulted in a vindictive, one-sided peace that contributed to another confrontation between the winners and losers of 1918.

Berg shows incontrovertibly that Lindbergh's anti-interventionism did not result from the fascistic motives attributed to him by the Roosevelt administration and by columnists Walter Winchell and Dorothy Thompson. Even in his most frequently criticized act as an America Firster, the Des Moines speech of September 1941 in which he mentioned the efforts by the British and some Jews to entangle the U.S. in the European War, Lindbergh tried not to be anti-Semitic. Lindbergh remarked that Jewish opposition to the Nazis was fully understandable but might have, for Jews and others, bad consequences if the U.S. were pushed into a disastrous war. After consulting with Jewish members of America First, Lindbergh apologized for any offense his words might have caused. He and his author wife, Anne Morrow, were plainly critical of anti-Semitism both publicly and in their diaries. Among Lindbergh's closest friends was his Jewish partner in commercial aviation and longtime correspondent, Harry Guggenheim.

Though the U.S. was justified in trying to remove the Nazis (and might have done so with minimal bloodshed as late as 1938), the historical actors did not enjoy a postwar retrospective vision. Often the leaders of the day did the necessary thing for extremely parochial reasons, as in the cases of Southern congressmen and Northeastern patricians who were ethnocentrically pro-British. In other cases the actors misjudged the immediate crisis, but, like Robert Taft, may have been correct in their concerns about American constitutional republicanism as practiced by a central state with increasingly ill-defined powers. In assessing the European situation, Lindbergh clearly underestimated the Nazi variable but was right about the benefit American participation would bring to Soviet tyranny. He was also overly impressed by German military potential during visits to the Third Reich in 1936 and 1938. And though Lindbergh expressed concern to his hosts about the need for peace and better treatment of German Jews, his diaries and letters suggest that he viewed a powerful Germany as a buffer against the Soviets.

These flawed judgments, however, should not serve to make Lindbergh appear as a villain. The courage, gravity, and high-mindedness that were evident through his life should continue to inspire his countrymen. At the very least, Berg's biography should counteract an impression I was given as a high school student by a very conventional history teacher: that the young aviator, unforgettably played by Jimmy Stewart, grew up to become a dangerous Nazi.

Paul Gottfried is a professor at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. His latest book is After Liberalism.

WOODY ALLEN, SERIOUSLY

By Peter Augustine Lawler

Reconstructing Woody: Art, Love, and Life in the Films of Woody Allen
By Mary P. Nichols
Rowman and Littlefield, 255 pages, $22.95

Woody Allen is famous for being a filmmaker who is both funny and deep. His movies are full of debts obvious and subtle to the best in film and literature. He's a darling of American intellectuals because erudition is required to appreciate Allen's art. But there's also some contempt for Allen from conservatives. His depth, they allege, is a bit of a sham. Allen's morally corrosive message is nothing more than the American version of atheistic, relativistic existentialism. He combines liberal self-indulgence, including the celebration of all that is whiny and neurotic, with spiritual fatalism to produce an easygoing, even agree-

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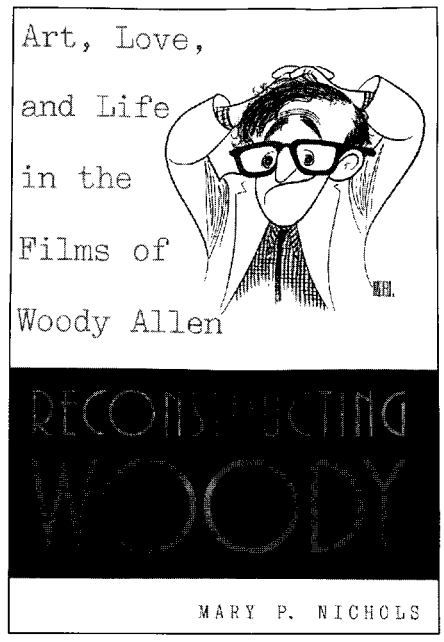
able, nihilism. Allen is, finally, just another New York intellectual. His work always culminates, Allan Bloom complained in *The Closing of the American Mind*, in "pure emptiness."

Mary Nichols, in her funny and deep book, has studied 12 of Allen's films closely enough to persuade me that Allen is not primarily an intellectual, but at his best a sort of moral philosopher. He aims to be a teacher of personal responsibility, including, by example, the moral responsibility of the thinker or artist. For Allen, art's "highest intention" is to "transform men's souls," as David Shane says at the beginning of *Bullets Over Broadway*. Allen defends the goodness of human life against the excessively morbid self-consciousness and ridiculous pretensions of modern intellectuals. He reminds Nichols of the Greek playwright Aristophanes mocking that pointy-head Socrates. But in an early sketch based on the *Apology of Socrates*, Allen also put himself in the place of Socrates.

Part Socrates, part Aristophanes, Allen addresses the spiritual and "so-called existential" themes at the heart of the tradition of Western philosophy and literature. Nichols observes that "Allen's films [only] begin with contemporary assumptions, nihilistic and existential." Then "they move from them to reveal the potential of the human soul for fulfillment in deeds of virtue and love." In classical fashion, they ascend from fashionable opinion to what is highest and most enduring about human nature.

At first look, Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite* is a rather slight tale framed by a tragic chorus about a sportswriter, a whore, and the comedy that is the search for family life in upscale Manhattan. But Nichols presents it as Allen's demonstration of how we moderns correct the tragic fatalism of the Greeks with doses of freedom and the possibility of virtue. Zeus in the film has an answering machine, and there's no telling whether he checks his messages. But at least he does not oppose our best efforts, and there's no telling what we might achieve on our own.

The tragedy of modern liberalism is its refusal to accept the intractable limits of human freedom, the inevitability of suffering and failure. The comedy of liberalism is its futile effort to dispense altogether with tragedy. Allen's more limited conception of human liberty incorporates some tragedy and comedy and leaves open the possibility of divine providence. The film hints, through the inexplicable appearance of the whore's perfect match in a helicopter, that God might answer prayers after all.



Allen shows that the atheism of the existentialist depends on an exaggerated conception of human liberty: the view that human beings can conquer chance and eradicate all mystery. So when the film portrays both the sportswriter's ability to do good and his inability to play God—he tries to transform the lovable whore into something she cannot be—Allen thereby corrects modern excesses with an ironic affirmation of the wondrous mystery of being merely human. The movie is also, and maybe more than Nichols sees, a rejection of the liberal individual's aspiration toward self-sufficiency. Man's social nature—and so his responsibilities to and dependence upon others—triumphs over perverse liberal conventions that deny the binding power of tradition and family.

The realistic and lovable defender of human liberty and virtue Nichols portrays is undeniably an attractive and instructive figure, but we have to wonder to what extent it is really Allen. Allen's recent *Deconstructing Harry* is particularly hard to fit into Nichols' interpretation. In this film, the character played by Allen (Harry Block) is nasty and morally irresponsible, and he seems to view his rather disgusting life as justified by the amoral excellence of his art. The Allen characters in previous films had characteristically been comparatively shy and sexually unadventurous. Block is aggressively foul-mouthed and obsessed with oral sex. Allen identified himself with Block's moral nihilism in an interview for the *Village Voice*.

Nichols had nearly completed her book before *Deconstructing Harry* was released, but she attempts to make her peace with it in the book's introduction. She really has to reach, beginning with the false claim that the film is very funny. *Deconstructing* should probably be understood as bringing to the surface an amoral artistic undercurrent present in many of Allen's films. It is Allen at his worst, and it is jarring in comparison to Allen at his best.

Nichols presents the best—and so a rather selective—case for Allen's moral and intellectual excellence. But that makes the book no less admirable and no less an indispensable source of moral and intellectual guidance. It may be the best contribution ever to film studies.

Peter Augustine Lawler is author of the forthcoming Postmodernism Rightly Understood: The Return to Realism in American Thought.

A WELL-REGULATED MILITIA AT WORK

By David Kopel

Target Switzerland: Swiss Armed Neutrality in World War II
By Stephen P. Halbrook
Sarpedon Publishers, 319 pages, $25

If all you know is what you read in the papers, then you must think Switzerland is one of the most despicable countries in the world. Switzerland, rather than joining the Allied cause, stayed neutral during World War II. After the war, Swiss banks retained the deposits of Holocaust victims rather than tracking down heirs to give them to. Case closed?

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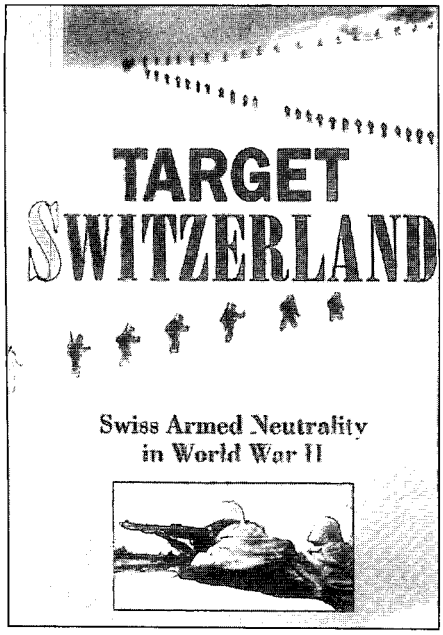

Not at all, historian Stephen Halbrook shows in *Target Switzerland*. Wrongful as the bankers' postwar behavior was, the behavior of the Swiss people during the war was morally exemplary—superior, indeed to the conduct of most of the rest of Europe. As Winston Churchill recalled, "of all the neutrals Switzerland has the greatest right to distinction.... She has been a Democratic State, standing for freedom in self-defense among her mountains, and in thought, in spite of race, largely on our side."

Nazi maps showed that the Third Reich would eventually include Switzerland, just as it would include all portions of Europe with German-speaking people. While the majority of Switzerland's population is German-speaking, the nation was virtually unanimous in hoping and praying for the defeat of Germany. Infuriated by the lack of ethnic solidarity, and by the strongly anti-Nazi stance of Switzerland's free press, Hitler predicted that Switzerland would be "liquidated" and that he would be known as "the butcher of the Swiss."

As Halbrook details, in every stage of the war, the Axis had powerful military reasons to invade Switzerland. Before the fall of France, the non-Alpine part of Switzerland offered an inviting path to sweep around the Maginot Line. After France fell and Italy entered the war, Switzerland offered the only convenient route for transporting men and supplies between Italy and Germany. After the Allied landing in Italy, Germany's need to swiftly deploy troops into Italy became even more urgent. As the war came to conclusion in 1944-45, the Nazi leadership laid plans to make a stand in the Alps, but Switzerland stood right in the middle.

By the summer of 1940, there was only one country on Germany's borders whose free press and rights of assembly allowed the Third Reich to be publicly and lawfully denounced as the evil empire it was. In every country on Germany's borders, targets of Hitler's hate were sent to extermination camps. But there was no Holocaust on Swiss soil. Switzerland protected her own Jews, and sheltered many more refugees of all religious backgrounds—equivalent on a per capita basis to the United States taking in 3 million refugees.

In all the countries that Hitler conquered, the economy was plundered for use in the Nazi war machine. As a neutral, Switzerland did trade with Germany and Italy (and with the Allies, as the Swiss smuggled out precision ball bearings and other military equipment disguised in consumer products like watches).

Although the Germans several times massed troops on the Swiss border, why was there no invasion? The Nazis could eventually have conquered Switzerland, but the price would have been fearful. The Wehrmacht expected 200,000 German casualties; it would have taken a very long time to remove the Swiss military from the Alpine "Reduit" in which they planned to make a stand. And by the time the Swiss were defeated, every bridge and train track and everything else of value to the conquerors would have been destroyed.

The reason that Switzerland was too difficult to invade—in contrast to the nations Hitler conquered in a matter of weeks—was the Swiss militia system. Unlike the other nations of Europe, which relied on a standing army, Switzerland was (and still is) defended by a universal militia. Every man was trained in war, had his rifle at home, was encouraged to practice frequently, and could be mobilized almost instantly. The Swiss militiaman was under orders to fight to the last bullet, and after that, with his bayonet, and after that, with his bare hands. Rather than having to defeat an army, Hitler would have needed to defeat a whole people.

Conversely, the Swiss citizen militia, with its extensive network of fortifications, had no offensive capability. The Swiss militia was not going to sweep into Berlin; modern Swiss-bashers who condemn the nation for not declaring war fail to understand that by keeping the Axis out of Switzerland, the Swiss were already doing everything they could for the Allied cause.

From the Anschluss of Austria to the Fall of France, Hitler swallowed nation after nation where cowardly ruling elites surrendered the country to the Nazis—either before the shooting began, or a few weeks afterward. But such a surrender would have been impossible in Switzerland, explains Halbrook. The Swiss governmental system was decentralized, with authority residing in 26 separate cantons. The federal government did notify the Swiss people that in case of a German invasion, any claim that there had been a Swiss surrender should be disregarded as Nazi propaganda. And because the military power was in the hands of every Swiss man, the federal government would have been unable to surrender even if it wanted to. Nothing could stop the Swiss militiamen from fighting to the very end.

America's Founders admired Switzerland as a "Sister Republic" amidst the despotisms of Europe. The Founders—like the Swiss—understood the moral implications of a universal militia system: A people who are trained to self-reliance and responsibility will defend their freedom to the utmost.

When, as William Shirer wrote from Berlin, the lamps of freedom were going out all over Europe, they burned brighter than ever in Switzerland, as the Swiss people maintained their democracy, their right to assemble, and their freedom of religion. And the Swiss people saved thousands and thousands of other Europeans from the gas chambers. And for all this, a well-regulated militia is to thank.

David Kopel is co-author of No More Wacos.

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off The Shelf

A REGULAR REVIEW OF CLASSIC, OVER-LOOKED, NEWLY RELEVANT, OR OTHERWISE DESERVING OLDER BOOKS

THE BLACK LIST

By Roger Clegg

Invisible Man
By Ralph Ellison, 1947

Native Son
By Richard Wright, 1940

Go Tell It on the Mountain
By James Baldwin, 1952

On last summer's Modern Library list of the 100 greatest English-language novels of the twentieth century, the first two by black authors were *Invisible Man* (1947) by Ralph Ellison and *Native Son* (1940) by Richard Wright.

The plots of the two books are similar, at least in broad outline. In each, a young black male flees the South for a big city up north, where he becomes involved with Communists and, ultimately, winds up outside of society. Both take place principally in urban settings and are written exclusively from the perspective of the protagonist (the nameless narrator in *Invisible Man*, Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*). There is plenty of violence and a little sex in both, but no romance in either. Both, unsurprisingly, are social protest novels focusing on racism, and neither, interestingly, is much impressed with white liberals.

But the differences are more interesting than the similarities. Bigger Thomas is a prototype of today's "super predator." He is an inarticulate, uncomprehending thug, an underclass thief, murderer, and rapist (he is punished for the accidental death of a white woman, but he also cold-bloodedly murders his black girlfriend after raping her). Ellison's narrator, by contrast, is a high-school orator, then a college boy, who is such a spellbinding speaker that the Communists quickly recruit him and put him in charge of their Harlem cell.

Both face stark discrimination, but their reactions—and Wright's and Ellison's prescriptions—are quite different. Bigger Thomas simply lashes out, and Wright, a sometime Communist himself, saw his protagonist as the symptom of a disease the only cure for which was class revolt. Indeed, Wright made clear that his critique of racism had to be understood as merely part of a broader criticism of American capitalism.

Ellison's narrator, on the other hand, not only rebels against white racism, but runs afoul of a union and ultimately rejects the Communists, all after unfairly being thrown out of college by its pompous, NAACP-style president. *Invisible Man* begins and ends with the narrator living alone, literally underground and not unhappily, in a chamber well-lit ("exactly 1,369 lights") with power stolen from Monopolated Light & Power. Ellison's prescriptions are decidedly personal rather than political: "And my problem was that I always tried to go in everyone's way but my own," writes the narrator in the epilogue. He has no political program, no proposed revolution, but instead a plea that seems aimed at the reader as another individual.

Wright, then 29, befriended the 23-year-old Ellison in 1937. In 1945, the by-then-famous Wright also helped a 20-year-old writer named James Baldwin win a foundation fellowship. But in 1951, Baldwin's essay explicitly attacking Wright in *Partisan Review* led to a painful break between the two writers.

Baldwin's 1952 *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is the third and final book by an African American on the Modern Library list. It, too, takes place in the urban North in the 1930s, where the adult characters have migrated from the South (*Native Son* is set in Chicago; the other two mostly in New York City). There is no single protagonist in Baldwin's semi-autobiographical book, and the plot is essentially a series of flashbacks—recollections—of the decidedly unhappy lives of the main characters: an all-too-human black minister, his wife, sister, and stepson.

Native Son and *Invisible Man* are essentially novels about racism, but not Baldwin's book. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* could have been written with white characters, whereas that change would make *Native Son* and *Invisible Man* incomprehensible. With its depressingly dysfunctional families and heavy religious themes, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* could have been written by Dostoevsky.

While religion is a figure of fun in *Invisible Man* (the protagonist's doppelganger is the sleazy Reverend B. P. Rinehart, "Spiritual Technologist") and an object of hostility in *Native Son* (the opiate of the masses, sure enough), all three novelists acknowledge its centrality in African-American culture. The ugliness of racism past, and the importance of religion to blacks, are the common themes of these three books and are most likely to strike today's reader.

The one, the only, institution to which black Americans could cling in the Jim Crow era was the church. Black churches played a critical role in the civil rights movement. A great irony for African Americans in the late twentieth century is that, at the same time that racism is being vanquished, many seem also to be turning from their rock of faith. In this they are not alone, but the price—sky-high illegitimacy, crime, and drug use, and a plummeting sense of personal responsibility—is one that they (even more than other, wealthier, groups) simply cannot afford to pay.

Roger Clegg is general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a Washington, D.C. think tank.

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EDITED BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

the Digest

SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS, AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS

Don't Limit Campaign Spending

Stanley C. Brubaker, "The Limits of Campaign Spending Limits," in The Public Interest *(Fall 1998), 1112 16th Street N.W. #530, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

In *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), the Supreme Court declared that limits on federal campaign spending violate First Amendment rights. Undaunted, proponents of spending limits make several arguments:

Campaigns cost too much. In 1995-96, federal candidates spent $2.2 billion, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, or $11.25 per eligible voter. Stanley Brubaker of Colgate University points out that this rate of spending is comparable to other democracies and that Americans spend twice as much on perfume and cologne.

Limits on spending benefit challengers. On the contrary, Brubaker replies, Incumbents have advantages like free press coverage and government-subsidized mail to keep their name before the public, while challengers require more funds than incumbents in order to "gain name recognition and positive publicity." Spending limits "would almost certainly further ensconce incumbents."

More money encourages politicians to "go negative." Actually, rationing funds may encourage campaign managers to choose cost-effective negative ads over more costly positive ones.

Brubaker calls for Congress to enact several reforms, including tripling the individual donation limit of $1,000 (which hasn't been raised since 1974) to adjust for inflation, removing restrictions on the amount political parties can give candidates, and restoring deductions for campaign contributions limited in the 1986 tax reform. Such changes, he argues, would be "congruent with, not wholly foreign to, our Constitution."

Lessons in Tax Reform

John Hood, "Tax Reform Schools," in Reason *(November 1998), 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.*

State taxes are often more regressive than federal taxes, and John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation, suggests it may be more difficult to reform a tax code at the state level than in Washington.

Consider the debate over tax reform in Texas, a state with no personal or corporate income tax. Texas has punitive property and franchise taxes on businesses that own a great deal of land, such as mining companies, oil refineries, and manufacturers. In 1997, Governor George W. Bush proposed slashing school property taxes by 40 percent, raising the sales tax by 0.5 percent, and replacing existing corporate taxes with a 1.25 percent 'business activity" tax that would apply uniformly to all enterprises with annual sales above $500,000. The proposal would have resulted in $2.8 billion in tax cuts and $1.8 billion in tax increases, for a total tax savings of $1 billion.

Many groups applauded Bush's decision, including the trade associations for farmers, oil and gas firms, and ranchers. But partnerships objected to the higher taxes they would have to pay, and others opposed new taxes on fringe benefits and on Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment compensation.

The Texas legislature debated several proposals and could not decide on any of them. Ultimately, only one part of Governor Bush's tax package was passed: an amendment to the state constitution to provide homes with a $25,000 property tax exemption. This constitutional change, subsequently approved by voters in a referendum, resulted in $1 billion in tax relief.

Texas, Hood contends, shows tax reform must be gradual to succeed. He applauds Virginia Governor James Gilmore's move to repeal a state property tax on cars. Another useful reform is to allow the self-employed to deduct all their health insurance premiums.

"The fact that there are political barriers to tax reform does not mean the cause is doomed," says Hood. "Reformers will need to design discrete, incremental policies that are consistent with the principles of tax neutrality and simplicity yet salable to lawmakers and voters."

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Getting Rich Pretty Quick

Marvin H. Kosters, Wage Levels and Inequality: Measuring and Interpreting the Trends. *AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Critics of business such as Robert Reich, Lester Thurow, and John Judis often cite data from the Bureau of Labor

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Statistics (BLS) which show stagnation in workers' wages. But Marvin Kosters of the American Enterprise Institute argues the data are severely misleading.

For instance, the BLS reports real average hourly earnings for nonsupervisory workers have fallen by 9 percent since 1973. But that figure does not include year-end bonuses or profit-sharing, even though studies on union contracts show 40-50 percent of union workers receive some type of annual bonus. Fringe benefits such as health insurance or pensions, which for decades have been rising far faster than wages, also are not counted. When the BLS counts all forms of compensation, far from falling by 9 percent, the average worker's compensation since 1973 *rises* by 16 percent in constant dollars.

The data have also been increasingly distorted by the BLS definitions of "production worker" and "supervisor." One way the BLS distinguishes "workers" from "supervisors" is by income, but the dividing line has not been adjusted for inflation since 1975 and thus assembly line workers—who earn good pay—are now not counted by the BLS as workers.

How are workers in fact doing? After correcting for distortions in the data, Kosters estimates that in constant dollars, the typical worker has seen his wages rise by 15 percent in the past quarter-century. Throw in fringe benefits and the typical worker earns 25 percent more than in 1973. "These numbers represent a slowdown in real wage growth since the 1950s or 1960s," he writes, "but not stagnation or pervasive deterioration."

SOCIETY

Depressed? Get Married and Go to Church

William R. Mattox, Jr., "Bawling Alone," in Policy Review *(September/October 1998), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.*

We live in prosperous times, yet more people are depressed, and persons born in recent decades report more cases of depression than those born earlier this century.

There are many reasons depression is rising. One involves the media, which find they can gain higher ratings with the gloomy than the hopeful. Similarly, researchers conduct 21 times more psychological studies on depression, anger, and anxiety, than on joy, happiness, or life satisfaction.

But William Mattox of *USA Today* contends that "the decline of civil society" is the primary reason depression is so common. According to the National Institute for Healthcare Research, people who live alone are more likely to be depressed than those who live with families. And singles "enmeshed in a community of supportive relationships" are happier than people who are isolated.

Churchgoers, for instance, are more content than people who don't belong to

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a church. Lisa Miller, a psychologist at Columbia University, found that young women whose mothers were devoutly religious were 50 percent less likely to be depressed than other young women. If mother and daughter share the same faith, depression falls further by about 30 percent. MIT social psychologist Sheena Sethi-Iyengar found that choice of denomination is also a factor in depression; members of conservative congregations were less likely to be depressed than members of more liberal faiths, because the conservatives were less likely to blame themselves for their problems.

"Much of our nation's 'epidemic' in clinical depression," Mattox contends, "is undoubtedly linked to nihilistic thinking." People who reach out to others, and to God, will end up being less unhappy.

Don't Mess with the SAT

David W. Murray, "The War Against Testing," in Commentary *(September 1998), 165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022.*

For decades, students from low-income families who have scored well on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) have used their test scores to attend good schools and get ahead in life. Today, the SAT is under severe assault because the test's foes wish to "achieve the ends of affirmative action by other, more politic means," reports David Murray of the Statistical Assessment Service.

Critics of the SAT argue that the test "favors certain kinds of students over others." Education writer Peter Sacks argues the test is biased against the poor because the knowledge tested is allegedly more available to middle-class whites than to minorities. In addition, feminists argue that girls suffer because the questions (such as identifying antonyms) favor "male" forms of thought.

The Educational Testing Service has responded to these charges with a series of concessions. In the 1970s, scores on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) were changed so the verbal portion of the test would count double the math part, in hopes more girls would receive scholarships awarded for excellent PSAT scores. In 1996, the ETS "re-centered" the SAT, inflating scores so that someone who would have received a 730 on the verbal test will now score a perfect 800.

Murray contends such changes are misguided because little evidence supports the complaints made against the SAT. An investigation by the National Academy of Sciences found no evidence the SAT is culturally biased. Moreover, if the SAT did discriminate against minorities, minorities with low SAT scores would tend to earn good grades once admitted to college. But Keith Widaman of the University of California found the SAT *overestimated* the first-year grades of black and Hispanic students.

No worthy replacement for the SAT exists. Grades are often inflated, and an *A* from a ghetto school is often not equivalent to an *A* in a suburb. While it's important to look at a high school senior's life achievements, only the SAT provides objective evidence of a potential student's ability to "pass a biology final or write a political-science research paper."

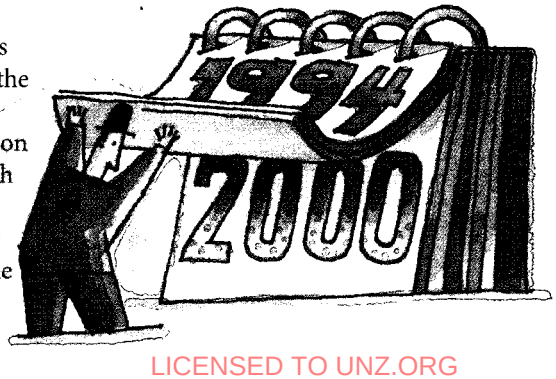
Ultimately, Murray worries, SAT foes want to abolish testing so schools will have no choice but to decide admissions by race and gender.

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

They Don't Have Your Number

Capers Jones, "Bad Days for Software," in IEEE Spectrum *(September 1998), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 345 East 47th Street, New York, New York 10017.*

Corporations and governments worldwide worry about the "Y2K crisis," when many computers will confuse the year 2000 with the year 1900, and cause disarray. But Capers Jones of Artemis Management Systems warns there are many other dates worldwide computers may have a hard time reading.



The first crisis should come in January 1999, when 11 European nations will replace their national currencies with the euro. By switching to the new currency, the European Union is launching the world's second-largest software project at the same time the year 2000 conversions are taking place. "Current figures indicate that worldwide there are too few working programmers to complete either in time," Jones writes. "Trying to do both on the same schedule will cause weighty economic problems."

If computers survive January 1, 2000, the next problem should come the following month, when many software programs won't realize that 2000 is a leap year and start misdating programs on February 29, 2000.

In the twenty-first century, three other long-term computer problems will cause problems. Theoretically, there are 1 billion potential Social Security numbers, but since Social Security numbers are not reused, problems will result when no new numbers remain. Shorter-term problems will arise when America runs out of ten-digit phone numbers, which will occur around 2015. Another long-term software problem will be reconciling American methods of month-first dating (as in 10/18/98) with European methods of writing dates with the day first (18/10/98).

Jones believes programmers will eventually solve such number problems. The cost to the world economy: $5 trillion.

The Murky World of Wetlands

Wetlands Overview: Problems With Acreage Data Persist. *GAO/RCED-98-150. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 37050, Washington, D.C. 20013.*

In 1989, President Bush declared the nation's wetlands in jeopardy and vowed there would be "no net loss" of wetlands during his administration. The Clinton administration repeated the pledge and this past February promised to *increase* the nation's wetlands by 100,000 acres each year beginning in 2005.

But nine years after Bush's pledge, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reports, the federal government has no

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idea how many wetlands exist in the U.S., nor whether their acreage is increasing or shrinking.

Thirty-six federal agencies have some jurisdiction over wetlands, including the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, State, and Transportation. In fiscal year 1997, these agencies spent $787 million—and 4,308 staff-*years*—on activities related to wetlands.

Two agencies—the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Agriculture Department's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)—have issued sharply differing analyses of the nation's wetlands. The FWS claims there are 101 million acres of wetlands, with 1.4 million lost to farms from 1985-95. The NRCS counters that there are 112 million acres of wetlands and that 309,000 acres were turned into farms from 1982-92. Both sets of numbers are extrapolated from statistical samples, not actual surveys of land use.

The two agencies don't even agree on the definitions of "protection," "restoration," and "improvement" of wetlands. The FWS, for example, says that a "restored" wetland is a piece of land that used to be a wetland, changed status, and then was restored, but it reasons that such a "restored" wetland can't count toward "a net gain of wetland acres."

Since 1990, five inter-agency task forces have failed to convince the government to apply a uniform standard for measuring the scope of America's wetlands. Because the government doesn't know how many acres of wetlands exist, and can't even agree on what a wetland is, the GAO concludes, "the progress made toward achieving the goal of no net loss of the nation's remaining wetlands …cannot be measured."

The EPA Inspector Calls

Jonathan H. Adler, "Bean Counting for a Better Earth: Environmental Enforcement at the EPA," in Regulation *(Spring 1998), Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.*

In December 1997, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it had issued more penalties and passed on more civil and criminal cases to the Justice Department than in any year in the agency's history. But Jonathan Adler of the Competitive Enterprise Institute argues that while "escalating fines, penalties, and jail terms may make for good politics," they "do not necessarily make for a cleaner planet."

When the EPA was founded in 1970, it hired "shock troops" eager to indict corporate polluters. The EPA boasted that it had fined more corporations in its first two months than its predecessor agencies had in five years. Within two years the EPA increased its enforcement staff from 300 to 1500. Except for Anne Gorsuch (EPA director, 1981-83), every EPA administrator has asked for, and received, more funding from Congress to enforce regulations.

While the EPA brags about its criminal suits, the states, which actually conduct 85 percent of all environmental prosecutions, have found it more productive to seek businesses' cooperation. In the past five years, two dozen states have passed "audit privilege" laws in which corporations conduct environmental audits of their factories and reveal violations of environmental regulations in return for protection from state lawsuits. But the EPA has threatened to sue states that have audit privilege laws and has sued firms that have voluntarily reported violations to states.

Adler charges that the EPA pursues high-profile criminal enforcement actions that garner headlines and bigger budgets, instead of using less confrontational tactics that might do more to stop pollution. In 1995, for example, EPA administrator Carol Browner announced General Motors was fined $11 million (the second-largest fine ever issued under the Clean Air Act) because 500,000 air conditioners in Cadillacs emitted carbon monoxide. Although carbon monoxide causes problems in the winter, it is not a problem in the summer when the air conditioners would presumably operate. Thus the prosecution of GM may have generated favorable publicity for the EPA, but it "can hardly be seen as a victory for environmental protection or public health."

"There is little, if any, evidence," Adler concludes, that the EPA's "priorities are tied to quantifiable risks to human health or environmental quality."

OTHER COUNTRIES

More Trouble Ahead for Asians

Nicholas Eberstadt, "Asia Tomorrow, Gray and Male," in The National Interest *(Fall 1998), 1112 16th Street N.W. #540, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Most of Asia is in the throes of economic depression. Nicholas Eberstadt of the American Enterprise Institute believes demographic trends will increase Asia's misery. Some of the most disturbing trends include "rapid population aging, declining manpower availability, and unnaturally imbalanced sex ratios."

Asia "will contain populations grayer than any yet witnessed in human history," Eberstadt writes. Whereas today Southeast Asia has ten children for every person 65 or older, by 2015 there will be only four children per senior citizen—and in Northeast Asia the ratio will be less than two to one.

Paying the pensions of elderly Asians will be a tremendous burden. Japan's social insurance system already has debts three times that of Social Security. To keep the system solvent, Japanese taxes on incomes will have to double by 2025. If Japan doesn't reform its social insurance system, the country's national debt will rise from 17 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) in 1995 to 102 percent of GDP by 2015. China's problems will be far worse, since by 2015 approximately 9 million Chinese will be turning 65 *each year*. In a low-income country where public and private pensions are rare, these elderly are virtually guaranteed to live in "crushing poverty."

As Asian nations age, finding young workers becomes increasingly difficult. Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam still have a large youth population, but other Asian countries with falling birth rates will have a more difficult time. Since most Asian nations shun immigrants (in 1995, Switzerland naturalized more immigrants than Japan did), labor shortages will rise in Asia, further dampening economic growth.

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Asia also faces another problem: A relative boom in the male birth rate. In most countries, 107 boys are born for every 100 girls. In South Korea, 116 boys are born for every 100 girls, and South Korea's government predicts the ratio will rise to 123:100 by 2010. In China the boy-girl ratio is 115:100. These imbalances, says Eberstadt, are largely caused by infanticide and abortion against girls by families preferring sons. If North and South Korea unify, one reason may be to make North Korean women available to South Korean bachelors.

Cuba's Decline Continues

Mark Falcoff, "Reflections on a Dying Revolution," in Orbis *(Fall 1998), Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1528 Walnut Street #610, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102.*

As Cuban dictator Fidel Castro begins his fortieth year in power, he has witnessed his nation transformed from a vanguard of revolution to a Communist anachronism. At the height of the Cold War, Cuba—buoyed by an annual subsidy of $6 billion from the Soviet Union—was able to send its troops throughout the world. Today Cuba is barely able to wield influence in the Caribbean, and has become so tourist-oriented that American Enterprise Institute scholar Mark Falcoff calls Cuba "a fraying Marxist police state in partnership with Club Med."

Falcoff suggests it's unlikely the economy will be saved by the tourist dollar. Given that Cuban bureaucracies consume so much of every tourist dollar, Falcoff predicts Cuba will need $18-24 billion each year from tourists to replace the lost Soviet subsidies. Mexico, a nation much more attractive to travelers, attracts only $7.6 billion from tourists. "Cubans can never expect to return to the relatively good old days of the Soviet subsidy."

What will happen to Cuba after Castro dies? After Castro came to power in 1959, most of the ruling classes emigrated to the U.S. and became productive citizens. Their children and grandchildren, while still speaking Spanish at home and still proud of their Cuban heritage, largely think of themselves as Americans of Cuban descent. As a result, Falcoff says, "Cuban-American meddling in island politics is likely to be minimal." There will probably be some token compensation for seized factories, but Cuban-American influence in Havana will probably end up comparable to that of American Jews in Israel or American Greeks in Greece.

Cuba's next leader will have to realize that, besides Cuban-Americans, few people will "care whether or not the country is rich or poor, or—since the end of the Cold War—stable or unstable."

When the World Bank Calls

Pascal Wick and Jane S. Shaw, "The Côte d'Ivoire's Troubled Economy: Why World Bank Intervention Failed," in Cato Journal *(Spring/Summer 1998), Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.*

In the 1960s and '70s the Ivory Coast was an African showcase. President Felix Houphouët-Boigny admired the West, and his nation was often portrayed as one of the West's few friends in Africa. From independence in 1960 until 1985, its economy grew by an average of 8 percent annually. But since then, Ivory Coast has turned into another collapsing African economy. From 1985-94, Ivory Coast's gross domestic product *fell* by an average rate of 4.3 percent annually.

Agricultural economist Pascal Wick and Jane S. Shaw of PERC see one primary culprit—the World Bank. In the 1960s and '70s, the World Bank heavily subsidized the country's economy. Ivory Coast's ruling class used bank loans to produce "prestigious but inefficient projects," including several huge dams and a new national capital, resulting in the government increasing its control of Ivory Coast's economy from 40 to 60 percent. In addition, Ivory Coast's rulers diverted much of the development loans into their personal bank accounts.

In the meantime, coffee and cocoa farmers suffered. They could only sell their crops to the government, which paid less than the crops were worth.

By the mid-1980s, Ivory Coast's international debt was $6.8 billion, equal to 85 percent of its gross domestic product. World Bank economists warned that the nation was on the verge of collapse and that drastic market-oriented reforms were needed, but higher-ups at the Bank ignored the advice and continued to loan the Ivory Coast money.

In 1990, seeing their money being wasted, World Bank bureaucrats finally cut off the country's loans. Ever since, Ivory Coast's leaders have denounced the "North" for not providing more funds and have complained that low international prices for coffee and cocoa keep their economy ailing.

Wick and Shaw reply that Ivory Coast's entrepreneurial farmers were heavily taxed for decades by "a predatory ruling class," which was kept in power through World Bank loans. Had the farmers been able to sell their crops directly to the world market, the country's economy would today be both "more diversified" and in much better shape.

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Christine Reyerson Coyle, Business Manager

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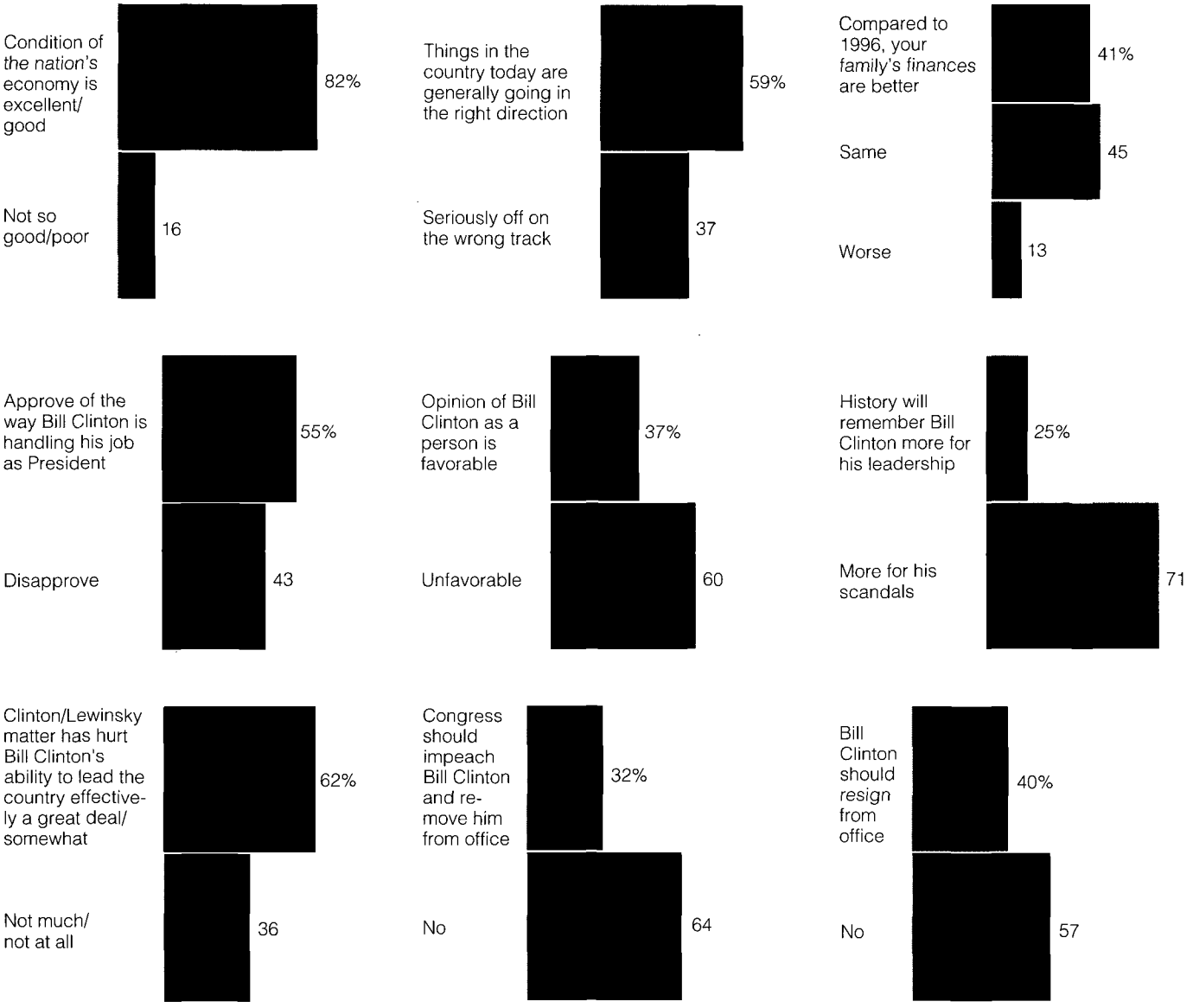
EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

WHAT THE VOTERS SAID ON ELECTION DAY

Over 80 percent of voters on Election Day pronounced the condition of the country's economy as excellent or good. Only 13 percent said their family finances were worse than in 1996. Voters approved of the job President Clinton was doing, but had an unfavorable view of him as a person. Far more said history would remember Bill Clinton more for his scandals than for his leadership. Voters felt the scandal had hurt the President's ability to lead, but majorities did not want Congress to impeach him. Nor did they want him to resign.



Source: Survey of 10,000+ voters as they left the polls by Voter News Service, a consortium of CBS News, NBC News, ABC News, CNN, Fox News, and Associated Press, November 3, 1998.

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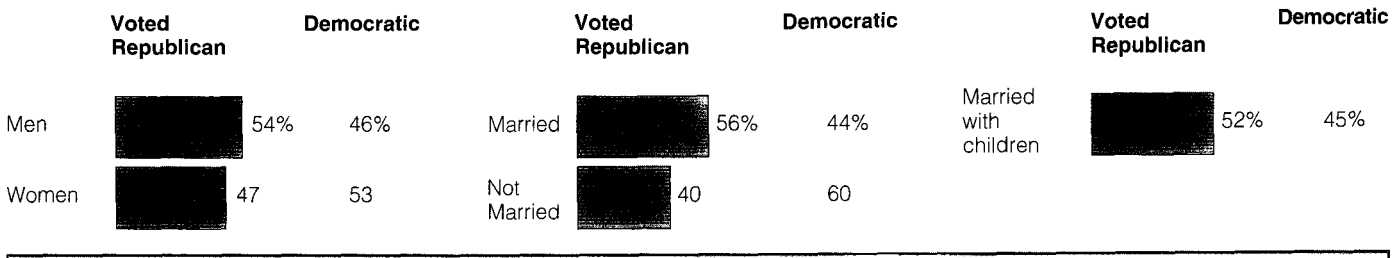
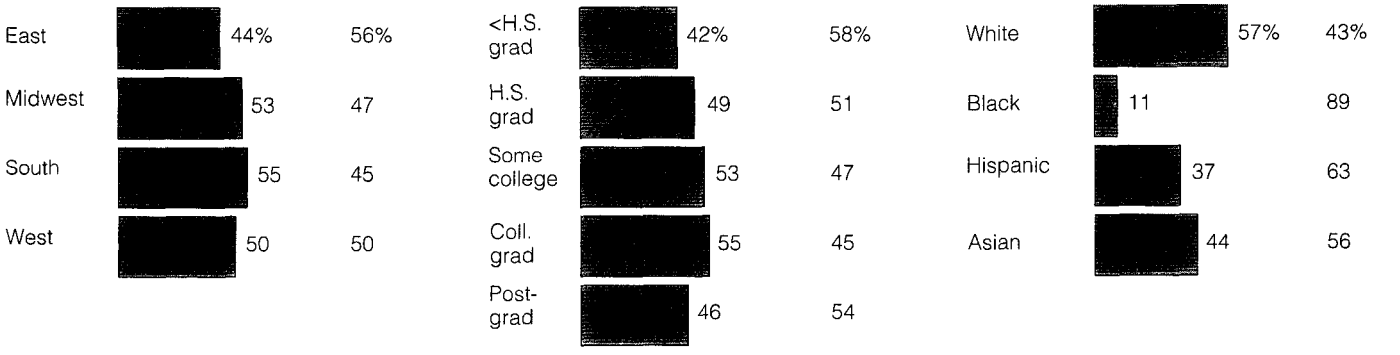
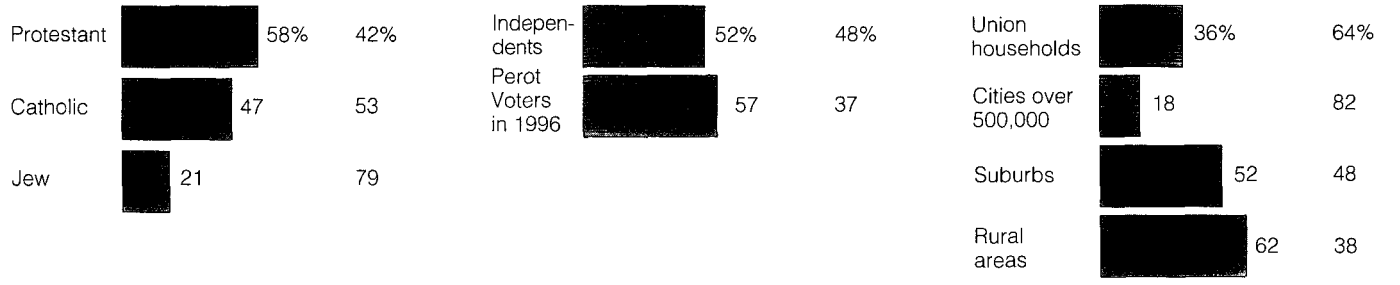
For more than 30 years, the television networks have been using exit polls to provide a portrait of voters—their attitudes and their vital statistics. On Election Day, Voter News Service, the consortium of ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox, and the Associated Press, interviewed more than 10,000 voters as they left the polls. Below we look at how some key groups of voters cast their ballots in House contests.



In every election since 1980, men and women have voted differently. Men lean more toward the Republicans, women toward the Democrats. Married voters are much more Republican than those who are unmarried.



The South and the Midwest were the GOP's best regions in 1998. Democrats do better among voters at the low and highest ends of the education continuum, Republicans with voters who have been to college. In House races, blacks voted overwhelmingly Democratic. A handful of Republican governors (including Engler in Michigan, Bush in Texas, and Voinovich in Ohio) got 20 percent or more of the black vote. Hispanics went for the Democrats nationally, though George W. and Jeb Bush managed to capture a large share of their votes.



Protestants looked Republican in their House votes, and Catholics and Jews, Democratic. Republicans and Democrats cast about nine of ten votes for their respective parties, but Independents voted for Republican House candidates. Those who indicated they voted for Perot in 1996 voted for Republican House candidates in 1998. Union households voted for Democratic House candidates as did voters in big cities. Voters in the suburbs and rural areas pulled the lever for the GOP.

Source: Survey of 10,000+ voters as they left the polls by Voter News Service, a consortium of CBS News, NBC News, ABC News, CNN, Fox News, and Associated Press, November 3, 1998.

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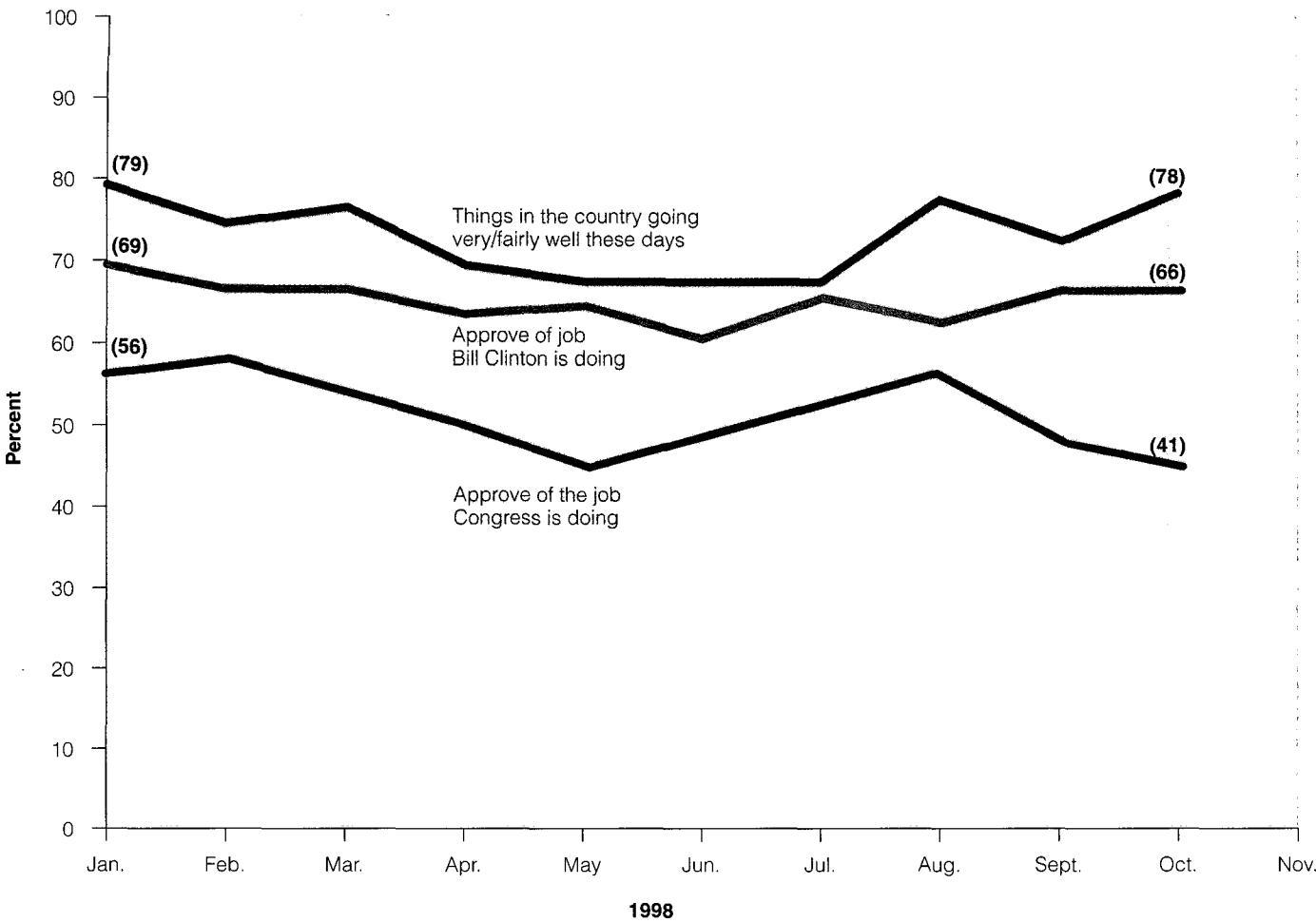
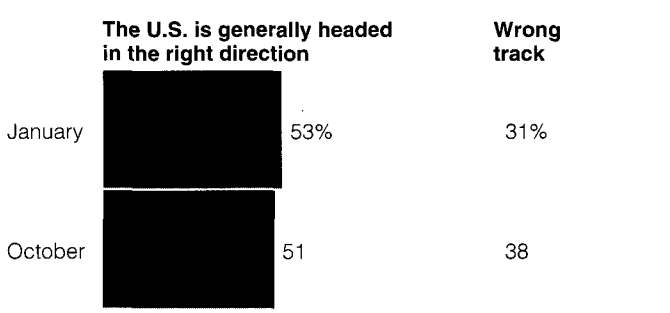
1998: THE YEAR IN POLLS

Since January, roughly three-quarters of those surveyed have said that things in the country have been going very or fairly well. The strong economy buoyed President Clinton's standing throughout the year, and his approval rating has been high and steady. Congress's 1998 ratings, while declining recently, have been among the highest since this question was first asked in 1974.



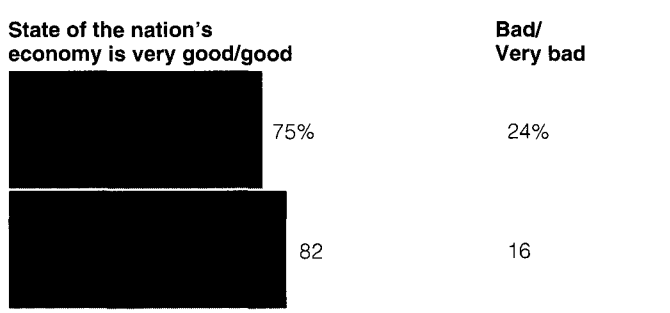
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization (for presidential and Congressional approval) and Yankelovich Partners (for things going well in the country), latest that of November 1998.

Question: **Considering how things are today,...?**



Source: Surveys by Opinion Dynamics for Fox News, latest that of October 1998.

Question: **Would you describe the state of the...?**



Source: Surveys by ABC News, latest that of October 1998.

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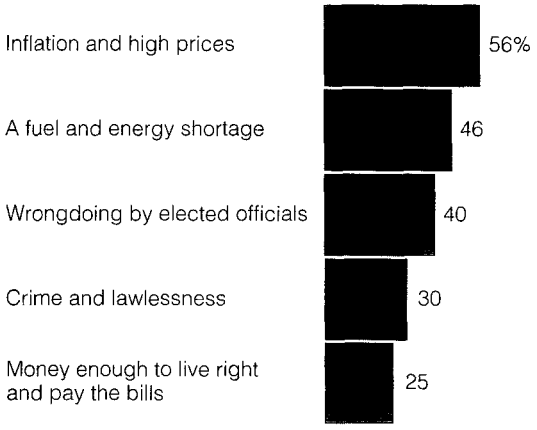
HAS AMERICA TURNED A CORNER?

Unlike the 1970s when worries about inflation and energy prices were uppermost in people's minds, concerns about the country's moral fiber are front and center today. Americans believe the nation's moral values and the institution of marriage have become weaker. Three-quarters say the nation is off on the wrong track in terms of its moral values and beliefs. Americans are confident about the future of their families and optimistic that we will solve problems if we put our minds to the task.

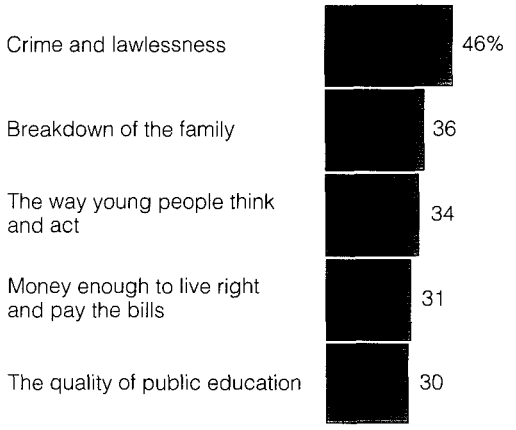
Question: **Here is a list of things people have told us they are concerned about today. Would you read over that list and then tell me which two or three you are...?**

Personally most concerned about today

1974

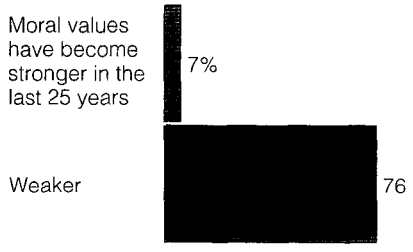


1998



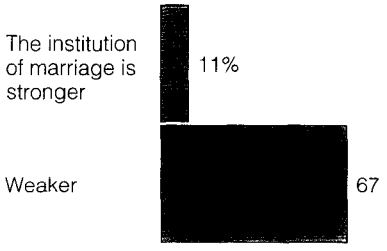
Source: Surveys by Roper Starch Worldwide, latest that of August 1998.

Question: **Generally speaking, do you think...?**



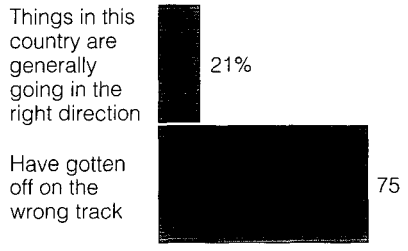
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 1996.

Question: **Compared to 10 years ago, do you think...?**



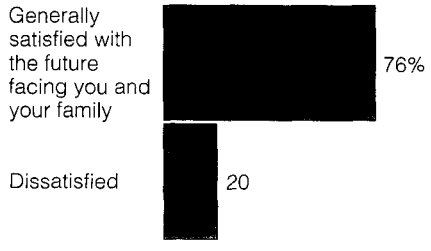
Source: Survey by CBS News/*New York Times*, May 1995.

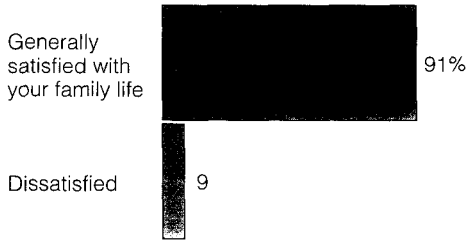
Question: **Thinking just about values and moral beliefs, do you think...?**



Source: Survey by the *Washington Post*, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University, August 1998.

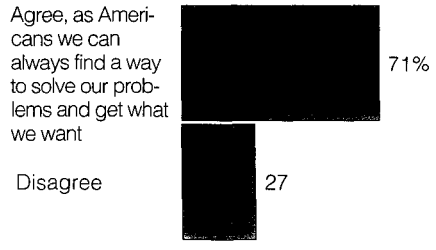
Question: **Please tell me whether you are...**





Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, April–May 1998.

Question: **Please tell me if you...?**



Source: Survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, November 1997.

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the Mail

Kudos to *The American Enterprise* for tackling race in America, which is sure to be a central issue in American public life well into the next millennium (November/December). To be taken seriously, however, TAE must avoid the kind of tokenism inherent in trotting out the pantheon of high-profile conservative minorities.

Anecdotal evidence against affirmative action is not persuasive. Substantive debate is overdue on the fundamental inequity of American institutions and the lack of upward mobility among significant numbers of minorities. For example, how can the Hispanic population in California represent about 25 percent of the tax base and only half that proportion of students in the University of California system—a taxpayer-supported institution? "Taxation without representation" is a strong argument for some form of affirmative action.

What is clear from the lack of dissenting voices in this issue of TAE is that 34 years of civil rights and a twelfth-hour conversion to the illusion of a "color-blind" society cannot offset the suffering of Americans at the hands of this insidious disease called racism.

Rafael Acosta
Fullerton, California

I especially appreciated the November/December issue on race. I was happy to see your BIRD'S EYE reference to Toni Morrison's piece on Bill Clinton and race in a recent *New Yorker*. It is difficult to find collections of articles expressing other-than-orthodox postions on the state of American race relations. The articles in this issue will certainly prove useful for students in my undergraduate courses.

Henry Walker
Cornell University

Thanks for the special edition of TAE on race. I found much in it that was useful. I loved the excerpt from John McWhorter's new book (*The Word on the Street*), which I will definitely buy.

Abigail Thernstrom
Lexington, Massachusetts

Despite the rhetoric of some political rabble-rousers, racism and prejudice are not recent American inventions. Both have been with mankind for centuries. It would be difficult to find any country without a history of racism or prejudice.

The United States has done more to improve the conditions of its citizens than any other nation in the world—including predominantly black nations in Africa.

Instead of castigating white Americans, minority leaders should concentrate their efforts on encouraging minority youths to join the American mainstream by earning an education, obeying the law, and taking responsibility.

Blaming the many past injustices that indeed took place does not improve the present situation, but further exacerbates race relations.

Americans can be proud of their efforts in the second half of this century to improve race relations in the United States.

Alan Y. Levine
Scottsdale, Arizona

I commend TAE on a fine job with the race issue. However, as a conservative black, I didn't find anything "fresh" about the conservative opinions presented, especially by black conservatives. Featuring the same old black conservatives instead of finding younger "real fresh" conservative attitudes only tells me that TAE needs to get out in the black communities more instead of relying on an out-dated Rolodex.

Conservative blacks are not monolithic by any means. By publishing like-minded blacks, you create a "mono-stereotype" which many conservative blacks are trying desperately to stray from. Being conservative does not necessarily make one an effective leader. One of the topics that escapes notice is the existing racist attitudes toward black conservative organizations. White conservatives still do not fully support black candidates for political office. This is a question that should take precedence if any change is to take place.

Roderick Conrad
via Compuserve

In reading your science issue, I agreed with Ian Wilmut's article ("The Ethics of Cloning," September/October). I think special emphasis should be placed on safety. We can justify or oppose cloning all we want, yet we cannot forget the physical and emotional harms brought on by this act. As in the Dolly case, there is a risk of a mother losing her life as well as the life of her child during pregnancy, due to abnormalities which occur more frequently than during natural pregnancy. Both physical and emotional pain are at stake here.

When considering the many social and intellectual arguments, we should take into account all the possibilities caused by this new technology. There is no question that cloning will have to be carefully regulated in the future.

Jaeman Lee
Raleigh, North Carolina

Ted Rueter's recent article attacking senior discounts (SCAN, November/December)

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail 75272.1226@compuserve.com. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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contains the same selfish garbage I hear from the mental midgets our high schools are producing.

First, for us retirees, there are no paychecks! It takes a great deal of investment to produce earnings significant enough to live on upon retirement. Second, Rueter doesn't mention whether the average retiree's "wealth" includes the value of his residence. While it's true that many retirees own homes, these same homes produce no income, are expensive to maintain, and are heavily taxed. Plus, just owning a home usually disqualifies a retiree from any public assistance. Third, income from investments doesn't receive cost-of-living/minimum wage increases like the ones wage earners receive. Each retiree must also gamble that his family will not require medical assistance as the elderly years approach.

Rueter's view is typical of selfish young people who were fed, housed, and educated by their parents for 20 years. While no sane retiree would dream of expecting his child to return the favor by taking care of him, it still seems reasonable to hope that the little darlings could at least stay off his back while he lives out his remaining years.

J. C. Bartholomew
Bisbee, Arizona

As a third-grade teacher, I was recently astonished by the reaction of my students to the cover of your July/August issue on China. They wanted to know what was meant by the picture since I am the only Asian-American teacher on staff.

I was offended by the picture and hope you will refrain from publishing any future photographs which promote stereotypes of any groups. I spend several hours a week in my classroom attempting to stop such thoughts from developing in my students.

While I do realize you have the right to choose what you put on your magazine covers, please think of the messages you are sending the children who will see your magazine. Luckily, I was able to discuss this problem at length with my class.

Jennifer Baal
Baltimore, Maryland

I love the way each issue of TAE focuses on one topic. I especially appreciated your day care issue (May/June). I have always thought day care is nothing short of child abuse. I have had a small legal practice out of my home for 18 years so I could be home with my sons.

The result of day care in many cases is divorce due to the unavailability of both parents. As a lawyer, I have worked on matrimonial law for many years and believe most of my clients decide to divorce not because the husbands are bad providers or bad fathers, but because the wife's job at the office is easier than staying home.

Your issue was terrific and said many politically incorrect things that needed to be said.

Candace R. McIntosh
Scottsville, New York

Martin Morse Wooster in his November/December book review claims Murray Rothbard condemned 99 percent of the libertarian movement as deviationists, thus calling himself a "paleo-libertarian."

This is a flippant take on an important matter. Rothbard was drawing attention to the huge gulf separating the radical critique of the consolidated state found in the works of Albert Jay Nock, Garet Garrett, and other anti-New Dealers.

The new, D.C.-style libertarianism wants a seat at the table of power and finds itself taking little risks that might bring into question its own perceived respectability in domestic and foreign policy. Indeed, the new libertarianism goes even further to shore up the ideological legitimacy of the state apparatus that dispenses media credibility.

As a result, it endorses trade agreements, enhanced executive/state power, government subsidies for education, promotes shell-game tax reform, backs supposed Social Security privatization, and embraces enemies of free association in the name of liberty (for example, the ACLU).

Wooster calls himself a fusionist, but Frank Meyer (who coined the term) was a radical opponent of the modern state and spent many years blasting conservatives when they fell for absurd Beltway tactics such as these. Meyer and Rothbard had more in common with each other than neo-libertarians and neo-conservatives have with either one.

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.
Ludwig von Mises Institute

I applaud TAE's ability to select a good cast of interviewees in LIVE. One month I find Clint Eastwood, the next Randall Wallace, and then, lo and behold, it's Pat Buchanan, Paul Johnson, and Leonard Garment. A great variety indeed and terrific interviews to be sure. Who's next?

I have also enjoyed the recent addition of HOLLYWOOD REPORT to your pages.

Keep up the good work!

Jon D. Schlogoefer
San Diego, California

"This BRILLIANT AND DISQUIETING book should reshape current debates and be essential reading for all who seek to understand them."
—Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

AFTER LIBERALISM
Mass Democracy in the Managerial State
Paul Gottfried

In this trenchant challenge to social engineering, Paul Gottfried analyzes a patricide: the slaying of nineteenth-century liberalism by the managerial state. Gottfried shows why it matters that the managerial state has replaced traditional liberalism: the new regimes of social engineers, he maintains, are elitists, and their rule is consensual only in the sense that it is unopposed by any widespread organized opposition.

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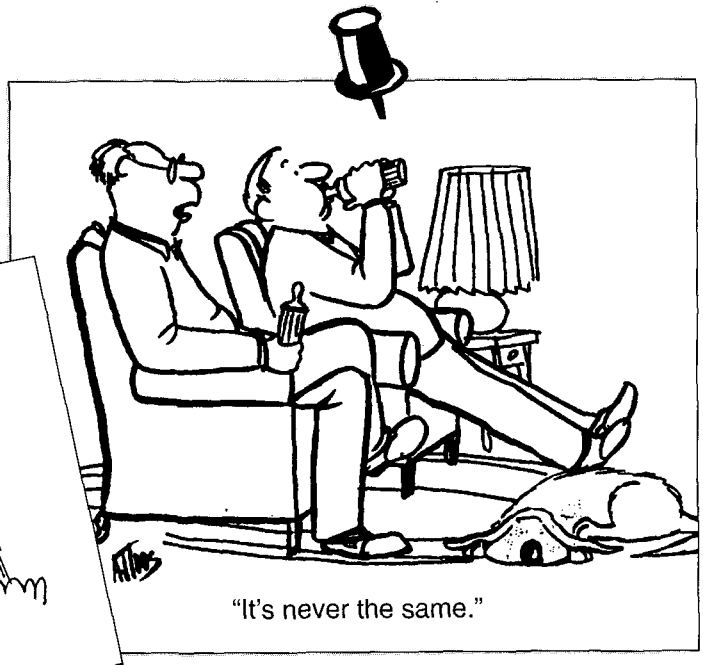
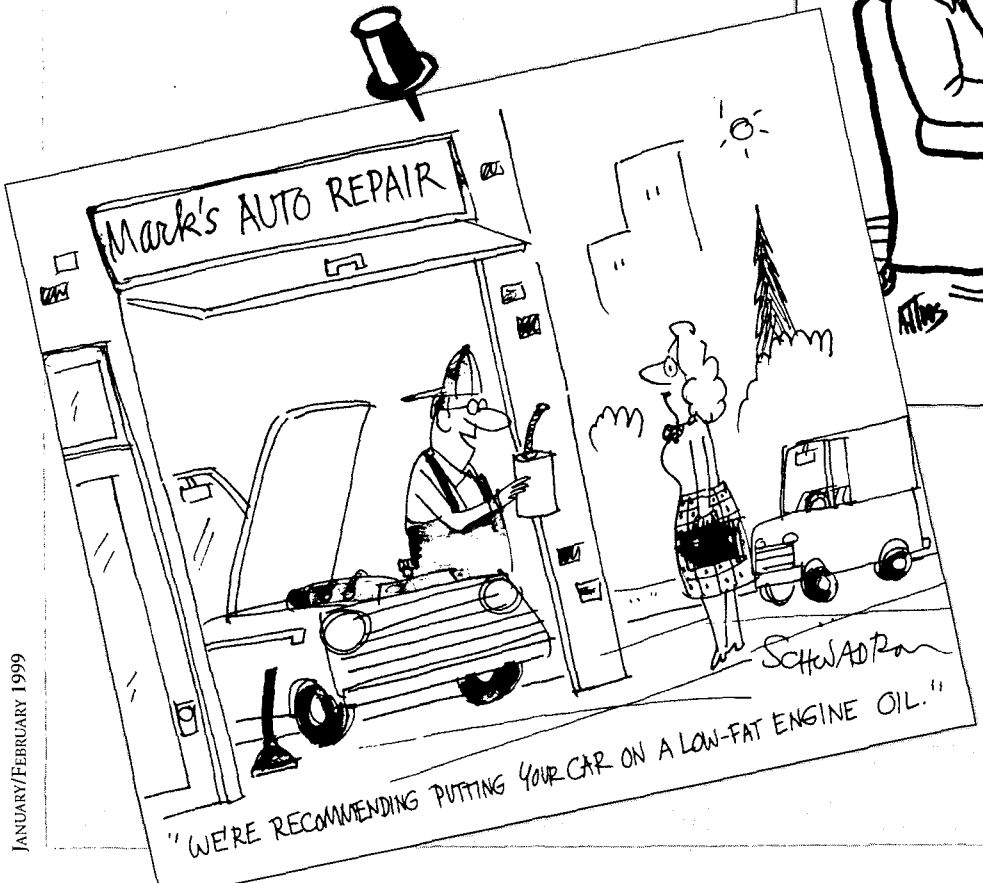


"It's never the same."



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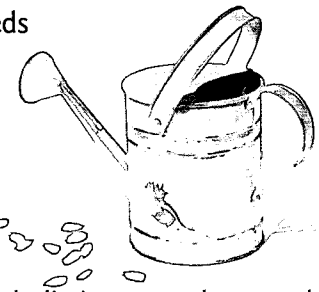
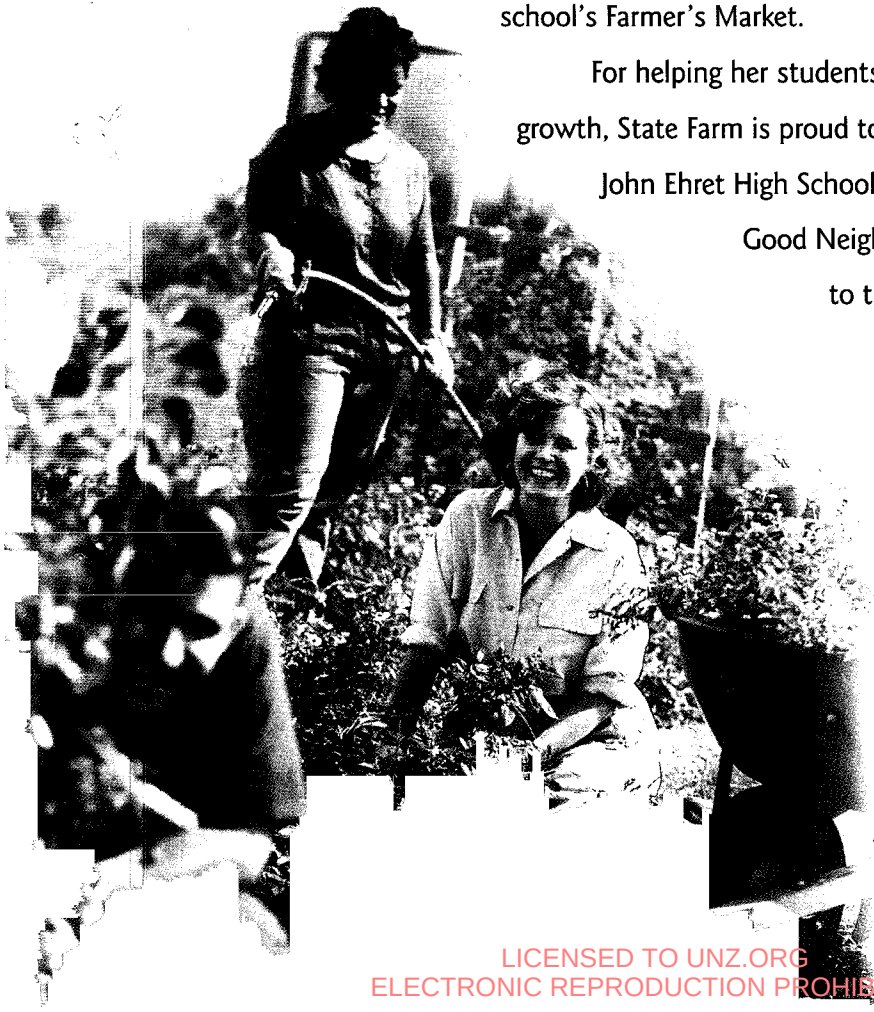
In Ms. Williger's Class, It's Not Just The Seeds That Have Grown.



Like all teachers, Karen Williger plants the seeds of knowledge and understanding in the minds of the young. Except that in this case, it's actually her students who are planting seeds and who are beginning to bloom because of it.

Her self-sustaining vocational program takes a holistic approach to academics. Students, with a variety of special needs, get a hands-on lesson in the business of horticulture. It teaches them patience and responsibility by letting them choose, plant and harvest their own crops. It hones their artistic abilities by allowing them to create their own floral bouquets and centerpieces. And it improves their self-confidence and social skills by allowing them to sell their goods and produce at the school's Farmer's Market.

For helping her students find new ways to achieve personal growth, State Farm is proud to present Karen Williger of the John Ehret High School, in Gretna, Louisiana with our Good Neighbor Award and to donate $5,000 to the school's horticulture program.



STATE FARM INSURANCE

Good Neighbor Award

STATE FARM INSURANCE COMPANIES
Home Offices: Bloomington, Illinois
www.statefarm.com

The Good Neighbor Award was developed in cooperation with The Council for Exceptional Children.

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She rocketed to the top of the high-tech world by helping transform a nerdy programming language at Sun into the buzzword of the Web. She even named it. Java. Fiercely independent, she then set out to co-found one of the hottest software startups, *Marimba*. Delivering the next generation of Internet technology to a host of blue-chip clients. Fearless entrepreneurs like Kim Polese find a kindred spirit in Forbes. The business magazine that delivers a point of view. Not conventional wisdom.

Forbes
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